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FRANCE OF TO-DAY



# FRANCE OF TO-DAY

A SURVEY

COMPARATIVE & RETROSPECTIVE

BY

M. BETHAM-EDWARDS

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EDITOR OF ARTHUR YOUNG'S 'TRAVELS'

AUTHOR OF 'THE ROOF OF FRANCE'

ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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I MUST here offer my warmest thanks to all those French friends without whose co-operation this work could never have been written. From all classes and both sexes I have ever received a friendly, nay, affectionate welcome. To the peasant, above all, I owe a debt of gratitude; alike his time, his information, and his hospitality being placed freely at my service—the poorest as well as the richest vying in courteous treatment of the stranger.

M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.



# CONTENTS

## PART I

### PROVINCES : PICARDY, ARTOIS, FRENCH FLANDERS

	PAGE
I. DEPARTMENT : PAS-DE-CALAIS . . .	3
II. DEPARTMENT : PAS-DE-CALAIS ( <i>continued</i> ) .	13
III. DEPARTMENT : NORD . . .	25
IV. DEPARTMENT : PAS-DE-CALAIS . . .	39

## PART II

### PROVINCES : SAVOY AND DAUPHINÉ

I. DEPARTMENT : SAVOY . . .	51
II. SAVOY ( <i>continued</i> ) . . .	62
III. DEPARTMENTS : ISÈRE, HAUTES ALPES .	77



## PART III

## PROVINCE : NORMANDY

	PAGE
I. DEPARTMENTS : SEINE INFÉRIEURE, MANCHE	101
II. DEPARTMENTS : CALVADOS, MANCHE .	116
III. MANCHE ( <i>continued</i> ) . . .	140

## PART IV

## PROVINCE : BRITTANY

I. DEPARTMENTS : CÔTES DU NORD, MORBIHAN	155
------------------------------------------	-----

## PART V

## PROVINCES : MAINE, TOURAINE, BEAUCE

I. DEPARTMENTS : SARTHE, INDRE AND LOIRE, LOIR AND CHER, EURE AND LOIR .	191
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## PART VI

## PROVINCES : PROVENCE, COMTÉ DE NICE

I. DEPARTMENTS : RHÔNE, VAUCLUSE .	213
II. DEPARTMENTS : BOUCHES DU RHÔNE, ALPES MARITIMES . . .	225
III. ALPES MARITIMES ( <i>continued</i> ) . .	246
IV. ALPES MARITIMES ( <i>continued</i> ) . .	261

## PART VII

PROVINCES : GÉVAUDAN, ROUERQUE,

HAUTE AUVERGNE

	PAGE
I. DEPARTMENTS : LOZÈRE, AVEYRON, CANTAL	275
APPENDIX I. . . . .	291
APPENDIX II. . . . .	329
INDEX . . . . .	347



# PART I

PROVINCES: PICARDY, ARTOIS, FRENCH  
FLANDERS





## DEPARTMENT : PAS-DE-CALAIS

“NINE hours’ rolling at anchor” was Arthur Young’s experience of a Channel passage in 1787 ; on the return journey he was compelled to wait three days for a wind. Two years later—in our own time a delightful little pleasure cruise of one and a quarter—the journey from Dover to Calais occupied fourteen hours. We might suppose from the hundreds of thousands of English travellers who yearly cross the Manche, that Picardy, Artois, and French Flanders would overflow with them, that we should hear English speech wherever we go, and find ourselves amid more distinctly English surroundings than even in Switzerland or Norway ; but no such thing. From the moment I quitted Boulogne to that of my departure from Calais, having made the round by way of Hesdin, Arras, Vitry-en-Artois, Douai, Lille, St. Omer, I no more encountered an English tourist than on the Causses of the Lozère a

few years before. Yet such a tour, costing so little as regards money, time, and fatigue, teems with interest of very varied and unlooked-for kind.

Every inch of ground is historic to begin with, and has contributed its page to Anglo-French annals or English romance. We may take the little railway from Hesdin to Abbeville, traversing the forest of Crécy, and drive across the cornfields to Agincourt. We may stop at Montreuil, which now looks well, not only "on the map," but from the railway carriage, reviving our recollections of *Tristram Shandy*. At Douai we find eighty English boys playing cricket and football under the eye of English Benedictine monks,—their college being survival of the persecutions of Good Queen Bess.

And to come down from history and romance to astounding prose, we find Roubaix, a town of 114,000 souls, that is to say, a fourth of the population of Lyons—a town whose financial transactions with the Bank of France exceed those of Rheims, Nîmes, Toulouse, or Montpellier, represented by a man of the people, the important functions of mayor being filled by the proprietor of a humble *estaminet* and vendor of newspapers, character and convictions only having raised the Socialist leader to such a post.

In rural districts there is much to learn. Peasant property exists more or less in every

part of France, but we are here more especially in presence of agriculture on a large scale. In the Pas-de-Calais and the Nord we find high farming in right good earnest, holdings of from ten to fifteen hundred acres conducted on the footing of large industrial concerns, capital, science, and enterprise being alike brought to bear upon the cultivation of the soil and by private individuals.

I travelled from Boulogne to Hesdin, in time for the first beautiful effect of spring-tide flower and foliage. The black-thorn and pear trees were already in full blossom, and the elm, poplar, and chestnut just bursting into leaf. Everything was very advanced, and around the one-storeyed, white-washed cottages, the lilacs showed masses of bloom, field and garden a month ahead of less favoured years.

Near Étaples the wide estuary of the Canche showed clear lake-like sheets of water amid the brilliant greenery ; later, are passed sandy downs with few trees or breaks in the landscape. This part of France should be seen during the budding season ; of itself unpicturesque, it is yet beautified by the early foliage. Hesdin is an ancient, quiet little town on the Canche, with tanneries making pictures and smells by the river, unpaved streets, and a very curious bit of civic architecture, the triple-storeyed portico of the Hôtel de Ville. Its 7000 and odd souls are soon to have their



museum, the nucleus being a splendid set of tapestries representing the battle of Agincourt, in loveliest shades of subdued blue and gray. The little inn is very clean and comfortable: for five francs a day you obtain the services of the master, who is cook; the mistress, who is chambermaid; and the daughters of the house, who wait at table.

My errand was to the neighbouring village of Hauteville - Caumont, whither I drove one afternoon. Quitting the town in a north-easterly direction, we enter one of those long, straight French roads that really seem as if they would never come to an end. The solitude of the scene around is astonishing to English eyes. For miles we only meet two road-menders and an itinerant glazier. On either side, far as the glance could reach, stretches the chessboard landscape,—expanse oceanic in its vastness of green and brown, fields of corn and clover alternating with land prepared for beetroot and potatoes. The extent and elevation of this plateau, formerly covered with forests, explain the excessive dryness of the climate. Bitter indeed must be the wintry blast, torrid the rays of summer here. As we proceed we see little breaks in the level uniformity, plains of apple-green and chocolate-brown; the land dips here and there, showing tiny combes and bits of refreshing wood. The houses, whether of

large landowner, functionary, or peasant, are invariably one-storeyed, the white walls, brown tiles, or thatched roof having an old-fashioned, rustic effect. One might suppose earthquakes were common from this habit of living on the ground floor. The dryness of the climate doubtless obviates risk of damp. Much more graceful are the little orchards of these homesteads than the mathematically planted cider apples seen here in all stages of growth. Even the blossoms of these trees later on cannot compare with the glory of an orchard in the old acceptance of the word, having reached maturity in the natural way. Certain portions of rural France are too geometrical. That I must admit.

Exquisitely clean, to use a farmer's expression, are these sweeps of corn and ploughed land, belonging to different owners, yet apparently without division. Only boundary stones at intervals mark the limits. Here we find no infinitesimal subdivision and no multiplicity of crops. Wheat, clover, oats form the triennial course, other crops being rye, potatoes, Swede turnips, sainfoin, and the oeillette or oil poppy. The cider apple is also an important product.

I found my friend's friend at home, and after a chat with madame and her daughter, we set out for our round of inspection. This gentleman farmed his own land, a beautifully cultivated

estate of several hundred acres; here and there a neighbour's field dovetailed into his own, but for the greater part lying compactly together. The first object that attracted my notice was a weather-beaten old windmill,—sole survivor of myriads formerly studding the country. This antiquated structure might have been the identical one slashed at by Don Quixote. Iron-gray, dilapidated, solitary, it rose between green fields and blue sky, like a lighthouse in mid-ocean. These mills are still used for crushing rye, the crushed grain being mixed with roots for cattle, and the straw used here, as elsewhere, for “liage” or tying up wheat-sheaves. The tenacity of this straw makes it very valuable for such purposes.

Corn, rye, and sainfoin were already very advanced, all here testifying to highly scientific farming; and elsewhere roots were being sown. The soil is prepared by a process called “marnage,” *i.e.* dug up to the extent of three feet, the “marne” or clayey soil being brought to the surface. A very valuable manure is that of the scoria or residue of dephosphated steel, formerly thrown away as worthless, but now largely imported from Hungary for agricultural purposes. Nitrate is also largely used to enrich the soil. Sixty years ago the Pas-de-Calais possessed large forests. Here, at Caumont, vast tracts have been cleared and brought under culture

since that time. These denuded plateaux, at a considerable elevation above the sea-level, are naturally very dry and very cold in winter, the climate being gradually modified by the almost total absence of trees. Wisely has the present Government interdicted further destruction; forests are now created instead, and we find private individuals planting instead of hacking down. Lucerne is not much cultivated, and my host told me an interesting fact concerning it; in order to grow lucerne, farmers must procure seeds of local growers. Seeds from the south of France do not produce robust plants.

The oeillette or purple-flowered poppy, cultivated for the production of oil, must form a charming crop in summer, and is a most important product. I was assured that oil procured from crushed seeds is the only kind absolutely free from flavour, and as such superior even to that of olives. Of equal importance is the cider apple.

The economic results of war are curiously exemplified here. During the war of 1871 German troops were stationed in the neighbouring department of the Somme, and there acquired the habit of drinking cider. So agreeable was found this drink that within the last few years cider apples have been largely exported to Germany, and just as a Frenchman now demands his Bock at a café, so in his bier-garten the German calls for his cider.

My host informed me that all his own apples, grown for commerce, went over the northern frontier. Cider is said to render the imbiber gout-proof and rheumatism-proof, but requires a long apprenticeship to render it palatable. The profits of an apple orchard are threefold. There is the crop gathered in October, which will produce in fair seasons 150 francs per hectare, and the two grass crops, apple trees not hurting the pasture.

I am not here in a region of peasant owners. Large farms like the one I speak of are cultivated by day labourers, as in the Pays de Caux, to be described further on, and as at home, with certain differences.

The peasant's harvest here are his potato-fed pigs. In our walks we came upon men and women sowing potatoes on their bit of hired land ; for the most part, alas ! this bit of land is tilled on Sundays, a neighbour's horse being hired or borrowed for the purpose. Thus neither man nor beast rest on the seventh day, and as a natural consequence church-going has gradually fallen into abeyance. We are now in an essentially Catholic department, to find Catholicism apparently a dead letter, a survival ! My host deplored this habit of turning Sunday into a veritable *corvée* for both human beings and cattle, but said that change of system must be very slow.

On the whole, the condition of the agricultural

labourer here contrasts very unfavourably with that of the peasant owner described elsewhere.

The same drawbacks exist as in England. Land for the most part being held by large owners, accommodation for poorer neighbours is insufficient. Many able-bodied workmen migrate to the towns, simply because they cannot get houses to live in ; such one-storeyed dwellings as exist have an uncared-for look, neither are the village folks so well dressed as in regions of peasant property. In fact I should say, after a very wide experience, that peasant property invariably uplifts and non-propertied labour drags down. This seems to me a conclusion mathematically demonstrable.

My host was mayor of his commune, and a man of progress and philanthropy in the widest sense of the word. He had lately brought about the opening of an infant school, and dwelt on the beneficial results, for children not being admitted to the communal schools under the age of seven, are otherwise thrown on the streets all day. Infant schools, however, are generally found in the larger communes. Intersecting my host's vast stretches of field and ploughed land lay the old strategic road from Rouen to St. Omer, a broad band of dazzling white thrown across the tremendous panorama. An immense plain is spread before us as a map, now crudely brilliant in hue, two

months later to show blending gold and purple. Vast too the views obtained on the homeward drive. Over against Hesdin rises its forest,—holiday ground of rich and poor, as yet undiscovered by the tourist. From this friendly little town a charming woodland journey may be made by the one-gauge railway now leading through the forest of Cr cy to Abbeville. I was sorry not to have more time at my disposal for a region, not picturesque certainly, but thoroughly French, unsophisticated and rural.

## II

### DEPARTMENT : PAS-DE-CALAIS (*continued*)

BETWEEN Hesdin and Arras the geometrically planted cider-apple trees and poplars growing in parallel lines are without beauty, but by the railway are bits of waste ground covered with cowslip, wind flowers, cuckoo pint, and dandelion. On the top of lofty elms here and there are dark masses ; these are the nests of the magpie, and apparently quite safe from molestation.

By the wayside we see evidences of peasant ownership on the most modest scale—women cutting their tiny patch of rye as green food for cattle, sowing their potato field, or keeping a few sheep. Everywhere lilacs are in full bloom, and the pear and cherry trees burdened with blossom as snow. Everything is a month ahead of ordinary years. I write of April 1893.

The Hotel St. Pol at Arras looks, I should say, precisely as it did in Robespierre's time. The furniture certainly belongs to that epoch ; sanitary



arrangements have made little advance, and the bare staircases and floors do not appear as if they had been well swept, much less scoured, since the fall of the Bastille. It is a rambling, I should say rat-haunted, old place, but fairly quiet and comfortable, with civil men-servants and no kind of pretence.

Arras itself, that is to say its Petite Place, is a specimen of Renaissance architecture hardly to be matched even in France. The Flemish gables and Spanish arcades, not a vestige of modernisation marring the effect, make a unique picture. Above all rises the first of those noble belfry towers met by the traveller on this round, souvenirs of civic rights hardly won and stoutly maintained. The first object looked for will be Robespierre's birthplace, an eminently respectable middle-class abode, now occupied by a personage almost as generally distasteful as that of the Terrorist himself, namely, a process-server or bailiff. A bright little lad whom I interrogated on the way testified the liveliest interest in my quest, and would not lose sight of me till I had discovered the right house. It is a yellow-walled, yellow-shuttered, symbolically atrabilious-looking place, with twenty-three front windows. Robespierre's parents must have been in decent circumstances when their son Maximilian was born, and perhaps the reverses of early life had no small

share in determining his after career. Left an orphan in early life, he owed his education and start in life to charity. I attended High Mass at the Cathedral on Sunday morning. The congregation was mainly composed of several hundred girls, orphans under charge of sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, and of three smaller girls' schools. The number of men of all classes I could count on my fingers. The service, at which the Bishop officiated, was very fine\* as far as the music and singing went; the sermon lasted only seven minutes. But for the girls' schools the vast interior would have been almost empty.

Arras abounds in conventual buildings, and one of my errands to this city was with these. I wanted to see the little daughter of a dear French friend, who on her mother's death had been placed in the school kept by a cloistered order. Such a school is a prison. From the beginning of the term to the end, the pupils are as completely secluded as the nuns themselves. Even parents are not allowed to see their children except in the convent parlour at stated hours. On Sundays they attend mass in the chapel attached to the convent.

A public day school for girls exists at Arras, but the higher education of women—we must never lose sight of the fact—is sternly denounced by Catholic authorities. Lay schools and lay

teachers for girls are not only unfashionable, they are immoral in the eyes of the orthodox.

The museum and public library, 40,000 and odd volumes, of this town of 26,000 souls are both magnificent and magnificently housed in the ancient Abbey de St. Vaast, adjoining cathedral, bishopric, and public garden.

Besides pictures, statuary, natural history, and archæological collections, occupying three storeys, is a room devoted exclusively to local talent and souvenirs. Among the numerous bequests of generous citizens is a collection of faïence lately left by a tradeswoman, whose portrait commemorates the deed. Some fine specimens of ancient tapestry of Arras, hence the name arras, chiefly in shades of gray and blue, and also specimens of the delicate hand-made Arras lace are here. There is also a room of technical exhibits: chemicals and minerals used in the industrial arts, dyes, textures.

Quite a third of the visitors thronging these sumptuous rooms were young recruits. A modern picture of Eustache St. Pierre and his companions, at the feet of Edward III. and his kneeling Queen, evoked much admiration. I heard one young soldier explaining the subject to a little group. There were also many family parties, and some blue blouses. How delightful such a place of resort, not so much in July weather,—on this

9th of April one might fancy it harvest time!—but on bleak, rainy, uninviting days. One of the officials advised me to visit the recently erected *École des Beaux Arts* at the other end of the town, which I did. I would here note the pride taken in their public collections by all concerned. This elderly man, most likely an old soldier, seemed as proud of the museum as if it were his own especial property.

I was at once shown over the spacious, airy, well-kept building—school of art and conservatorium of music in one, both built, set on foot, and maintained by the municipality. Here youths and girls of all ranks can obtain a thorough artistic and musical training without a fraction of cost. The classes are held in separate rooms, and boys in addition learn modelling and mechanical drawing.

The school was opened four years ago, and already numbers eighty students of both sexes, girls meeting two afternoons a week, boys every evening. Arras also possesses an *École Normale* or large training school for female teachers.

On this brilliant Sunday afternoon, although many small shops were open, I was glad to note the cessation of street traffic. Every one seemed abroad, and business at a standstill. All the newspaper kiosks were closed.

Next morning, soon after eight o'clock, I was

off to Vitry-en-Artois for a day's farming. At the little station I was met by a friend's friend—typical young Frenchman, gaiety itself, amiable, easy, all his faculties alert—and driven in a little English dogcart to the neighbouring village. Twenty-five minutes brought us to our destination—house and model farm of a neighbour, upwards of twelve hundred acres, all cultivated on the most approved methods. Our host now took my young friend's reins, he seating himself behind, and we drove slowly over a large portion of the estate, taking a zigzag course across the fields. There are here three kinds of soil—dry, chalky, and unproductive, rich loam and light intermediate. In spite of the drought of the last few weeks the crops are very luxuriant, and quite a month ahead of former seasons.

This estate of six hundred and odd hectares is a specimen of high farming on a large scale, such as I had never before witnessed in France. I do not exaggerate when I say that from end to end could not be discerned a single weed. Of course the expense of cultivation on such a scale is very great, and hardly remunerative at the present price of wheat.

Sixty hectares, *i.e.* nearly 150 acres, are planted with wheat, and two-thirds of that superficies with beetroot. The young corn was as advanced as in June with us, some kinds of richer growth than

others, and showing different shades of green, each tract absolutely weedless, and giving evidence of highest cultivation. Fourteen hectolitres<sup>1</sup> per hectare of corn is the average, forty the maximum. Besides beetroot for sugar, clover and sainfoin are grown, little or no barley, and neither turnips nor mangel-wurzel.

The land is just now prepared for planting beetroot, by far the most important crop here, and on which I shall have much to say. Henceforth, indeed, the farming I describe may be called industrial, purely agricultural products being secondary.

On the importance of beetroot sugar it is hardly necessary to dwell at length. A few preliminary facts, however, may be acceptable. Up till the year 1812 cane sugar only was known in France; the discovery of beetroot sugar dates from the continental blockade of that period. In 1855 the amount of raw sugar produced from beetroot throughout France was 90 millions of kilos.<sup>2</sup> In 1873 the sum total had reached 400 millions. The consumption of sugar per head here is nevertheless one-third less than among ourselves.

We now come to see the results of fiscal regulation upon agriculture. Formerly duty was paid

<sup>1</sup> Hectolitre = 2 bushels 3 pecks. See Note 1, Corn Averages.

<sup>2</sup> Kilogramme = 2 lbs. 3 oz.

not upon the root itself but its product. This is now changed, and the beetroot being taxed the grower strives after that kind producing the largest percentage of saccharine matter. Hardly less important is the residue. The pulp of the crushed beetroot in these regions forms the staple food of cows, pigs, and sheep. Mixed with chopped straw, it is stored for winter use in mounds by small cultivators, in enormous cellars constructed on purpose by large owners. Horses refuse to eat this mixture, which has a peculiar odour, scenting farm premises from end to end. The chief manure used is that produced on the farm and nitrates. On this especial estate dried fish from Sweden had been tried, and, as on the farm before mentioned, chalky land is dug to the depth of three feet, the better soil being put on the top. This is the process called "marnage." We now drove for miles right across the wide stretches of young wheat and land prepared for beetroot. The wheels of our light cart, the host said, would do good rather than harm. Horse beans, planted a few weeks before, were well up; colza also was pretty forward. Pastures there were none. Although the cornfields were as clean as royal gardens we came upon parties of women, girls, and boys hoeing here and there. The rows of young wheat showed as much uniformity as a newly-planted vineyard.

Ploughing and harrowing were being done chiefly by horses, only a few oxen being used. My host told me that his animals were never worked on Sundays. On week-days they remain longer afield than with us, but a halt of an hour or two is made for food and rest at mid-day. Another crop to be mentioned is what is called "hivernage" or winter fodder, *i.e.* lentils planted between rows of rye, the latter being grown merely to protect the other. On my query as to the school attendance of boys and girls employed in agriculture, my host said the authorities are by no means rigid; at certain seasons of the year, indeed, they are not expected to attend. Among some large landowners we find tolerably conservative notions even in France. Over-education, they say, is unfitting the people for manual labour, putting them out of their place, and so forth.

Moles are not exterminated. "They do more good than harm," said my host, "and I like them." I had heard the same thing at Caumont, where were many mole-hills. Here and there, dovetailed into these enormous fields, were small patches farmed by the peasants, rarely their own property. Their condition was described as neither that of prosperity nor want. "They get along." That was the verdict.

In our long drive across weedless corn and clover fields we came upon a small wood, a recent



plantation of our host. Even this bit of greenery made a pleasant break in the uniform landscape. We then drove home, and inspected the premises on foot. Everything was on a colossal scale, and trim as a Dutch interior. The vast collection of machinery included the latest French, English, Belgian, and American inventions. Steam engines are fixtures, the consumption of coal being 160 tons yearly per 300 hectares.

We are thus brought face to face with the agriculture of the future, ancient methods and appliances being supplanted one by one, manual labour reduced to the minimum, the cultivation of the soil become purely mechanical. The idyllic element vanishes from rural life all savours of Chicago! Stables and neat-houses were the perfection of cleanliness and airiness. Here for the first time I saw sheep stabled like cows and horses. Their quarters were very clean, and littered with fresh straw. They go afield for a portion of the day, but, as I have before mentioned, pastures are few and far between.

The enormous underground storehouses for beetroot pulp and chopped straw were now almost empty. At mid-day, the oxen were led home and fell to their strange food with appetite, its moistness being undoubtedly an advantage in dry weather. The cart horses were being fed with boiled barley, and looked in first-rate

condition. Indeed, all the animals seemed as happy and well cared for as my host's scores upon scores of pet birds. Birds, however, are capricious, and nothing would induce a beautiful green parrot to cry "Vive la France," "À bas la Prusse," in my presence. After an animated breakfast,—thoroughly French breakfast, the best of everything cooked and served in the best possible manner—we took leave, and my young friend drove me back to Vitry to call upon his own family.

M. D., senior, is a miller, and the family dwelling, which adjoins his huge water-mill, is very prettily situated on the Scarpe. We entered by a little wooden bridge running outside, a conservatory filled with exotics and ferns lending the place a fairy look. I never saw anything in rural France that more fascinated me than this water-mill with its crystal clear waters and surrounding foliage. M. D. with his three sons quitted their occupation as we drove up. Madame and her young daughter joined us in the cool salon, and we chatted pleasantly for a quarter of an hour.

I was much struck with the head of the family, an elderly man with blue eyes, fine features, and a thoughtful expression. He spoke sadly of the effect of American competition, and admitted that protection could offer but a mere palliative.

Hitherto I had found a keenly protectionist bias among French agriculturists. Of England and the English he spoke with much sympathy. "C'est le plus grand peuple au monde" (It is the greatest nation in the world), he said.

Nothing could equal the ease and cordiality with which this charming family received me. The miller with his three elder sons had come straight from the mill. Well-educated gentlemen are not ashamed of manual labour in France. How I wished I could have spent days, nay weeks, in the neighbourhood of the water-mill !

### III

#### DEPARTMENT : NORD

ONLY three museums in France date prior to the Revolution, those of Rheims, founded in 1748, and of Dijon and Nancy, founded in 1787. The opening in Paris of the Muséum Français in 1792, consisting of the royal collections and art treasures of suppressed convents, was the beginning of a great movement in this direction. At Lille the municipal authorities first got together a few pictures in the convent of the Récollets, and Watteau the painter was deputed to draw up a catalogue. On the 12th May 1795, the collection consisted of 583 pictures and 58 engravings. On the 1st September 1801, the consuls decreed the formation of departmental museums and distribution of public art treasures. It was not, however, till 1848 that the municipal council of Lille set to work in earnest upon the enrichment of the museum, now one of the finest of provincial cities. The present superb building

was erected entirely at the expense of the municipality, and was only opened two years ago. It has recently been enriched by art treasures worth a million of francs, gift of a rich citizen and his wife, tapestries, faience, furniture, enamels, ivories, illuminated MSS., rare bindings, engraved gems. Before that time the unrivalled collection of drawings by old masters had lent the Lille museum a value especially its own.

The collections are open every day, Sundays included. Being entirely built of stone, there is little risk of fire. Thieves are guarded against by two caretakers inside the building at night and two patrols outside. It is an enormous structure, and arranged with much taste.

The old wall still encircles the inner town, and very pretty is the contrast of gray stone and fresh spring foliage; lilacs in full bloom, also the almond, cherry, pear tree, and many others.

Lille nowadays recalls quite other thoughts than those suggested by Tristram Shandy. It may be described as a town within towns, the manufacturing centres around having gradually developed into large rival municipalities. Among these are Tourcoing, Croix, and Roubaix, now more than half as large as Lille itself. I stayed a week at Lille, and had I remained there a year in one respect should have come away no whit the wiser. The manufactories, one and all,

are inaccessible as the interior of a Carmelite convent. Queen Victoria could get inside the monastery of the Grand Chartreuse, but I question whether Her Majesty would be permitted to see over a manufactory of thread gloves at Lille!

Such jealousy has doubtless its reason. Most likely trade secrets have been filched by foreign rivals under the guise of the ordinary tourist. Be this as it may, the confection of a tablecloth or piece of beige is kept as profoundly secret as that of the famous pepper tarts of Prince Bedreddin or the life-sustaining cordial of celebrated fasters.

In the hope of winning over a feminine mind I drove with a friend to one of the largest factories at Croix, the property of a lady.

Here, as at Mulhouse, mill-owners live in the midst of their works. They do not leave business cares behind them, after English fashion, dwelling as far away as possible from factory chimneys. The premises of Madame C. are on a magnificent scale; all in red brick, fresh as if erected yesterday, the mistress's house—a vast mansion—a little removed from these and surrounded by elegantly-arranged grounds. A good deal of bowing and scraping had to be got through before we were even admitted to the portress's lodge, as much more ceremonial before the portress could be induced to convey our errand

to one of the numerous clerks in a counting-house close by. At length, and after many dubious shakes of the head and murmurs of surprise at our audacity, the card was transmitted to the mansion.

A polite summons to the great lady's presence raised our hopes. There seemed at least some faint hope of success. Traversing the gravelled path, as we did so catching sight of madame's coach-house and half-dozen carriages,—landau, brougham, brake, and how many more!—we reached the front door. Here the clerk left us, and a footman in livery, with no little ceremony, ushered us into the first of a suite of reception rooms, all fitted up in the modern style, and having abundance of ferns and exotics.

At the end of the last salon a fashionably dressed lady, typically French in feature, manners, and deportment, sat talking to two gentlemen. She very graciously advanced to meet us, held out a small white hand covered with rings, and with the sweetest smile heard my modestly reiterated request to be allowed a glimpse of the factory. Would that I could convey the gesture, expression of face, and tone of voice with which she replied, in the fewest possible words, but volumes were less eloquent—

“Jamais, jamais, jamais!” (Never, never, never!) This was all. A tragedian could not

have put so much meaning into so small a compass.

After that inimitable, unforgettable "Jamais, jamais, jamais!" there was nothing to do but make our bow and retire, discomfiture amply atoned by the little scene just described.

We next drove straight through Lille to the vast park or Bois, as it is called, not many years since acquired by the town as a pleasure-ground. Very wisely the pretty, irregular stretch of glade, dell, and wood has been left as it was, only a few paths, seats, and plantations being added. No manufacturing town in France is better off in this respect. Wide handsome boulevards lead to the Bois and pretty botanical garden, many private mansions having beautiful grounds, but walled in completely as those of cloistered convents. The fresh spring greenery and multitude of flowering trees and shrubs make suburban Lille look its best, outside the town every cottage has a bit of ground and tree or two.

During this second week of April the weather suddenly changed. Rain fell, and a keen east wind rendered fires and winter garments once more indispensable. On one of these cold, windy days I went with Lille friends to Roubaix, as cold and windy a town, I should say, as any in France.

A preliminary word or two must be said about



Roubaix, the city of strikes, pre-eminently the Socialist city.

City we may indeed call it, and it is one of rapidly increasing dimensions. In the beginning of the century Roubaix numbered 8000 souls only. Its population is now 114,000. Since 1862 the number of its machines has quintupled. Every week 600 tons of wool are brought to the mills. As I have before mentioned, more business is transacted with the Bank of France by this *chef-lieu* of a canton than by Toulouse, Rheims, Nîmes, or Montpellier. The speciality of Roubaix is its dress-stuffs and woollen materials, large quantities of which are exported to America. To see these soft, delicate fabrics we must visit Regent Street and other fashionable quarters, not an inch is to be caught sight of here. 13676

Roubaix is a handsome town, with every possible softening down of grimy factory walls and tall chimneys. A broad, well-built street leads to the Hôtel de Ville; another equally wide street, with mansions of wealthy mill-owners and adjacent factories, leads to the new Boulevard de Paris and pretty public park, where a band plays on Sunday afternoons.

But my first object was to obtain an interview with the Socialist mayor, a man of whom I had heard much. A friend residing at Lille kindly paved the way by sending his own card with

mine, the messenger bringing back a courteous reply. Unfortunately, the Conseil-Général then sitting at Lille curtailed the time at the mayor's disposal, but before one o'clock he would be pleased to receive me, he sent word. Accordingly, conducted by my friend's clerk, I set out for the Town Hall.

We waited some little time in the vestibule, the chief magistrate of Roubaix being very busy, Deputy-mayors, adjoints, were coming and going, and liveried officials bustled about, glancing at me from time to time, but without any impertinent curiosity. Impertinent curiosity, by the way, we rarely meet with in France. People seem of opinion that everybody must be the best judge of his or her own business. I was finally ushered into the council chamber, where the mayor and three deputy-mayors sat at a long table covered with green baize, transacting business. He very courteously bade me take a seat beside him, and we at once entered into conversation. The work-man's representative of the city of strikes and socialism is a remarkable looking man in middle life. Tall, angular, beardless, with the head of a leader, he would be noticed anywhere. There is a look of indomitable conviction in his face, and a quiet dignity from which neither his shabby clothes nor his humble calling detract. Can any indeed well be humbler? The first magistrate of

a city of a hundred and fourteen thousand souls, a large percentage of whom are educated, wealthy men of the world, keeps, as I have said, a small *estaminet* or café in which smoking is permitted,<sup>1</sup> and sells newspapers, himself early in the morning making up and delivering his bundles to the various retailers. Here indeed we have the principles of the Republic — Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—carried out to their logical conclusion. Without money, without social position, this man owes his present dignity to sheer force of character and conviction. Possessed of wider political knowledge he would assuredly rise to the front rank; will he overcome such an obstacle? It remains to be seen. We chatted of socialism and the phases of it more immediately connected with Roubaix, on which latter subject I ventured to beg a little information.

“We must go to the fountain head,” he replied very affably. “I regret that time does not permit me to enter into particulars now; but leave me your English address. The information required shall be forwarded.”

We then talked of socialism in England, of his English friends, and he was much interested to learn that I had once seen the great Marx and heard him speak at a meeting of the International in Holborn twenty-five years ago.

<sup>1</sup> I give Littré's meaning of *estaminet*.

Then I told him, what perhaps he knew, of the liberty accorded by the present Government to hold meetings in Trafalgar Square, and we spoke of Gladstone. "A good democrat, but born too early for socialism—the future of the world. One cannot take to socialism at eighty-three years of age," I said.

"No, that is somewhat late in the day," was the smiling reply.

After a little more talk, I informed him that one of my works was exhibited at Chicago, a fact that seemed to impress my listeners very favourably. I then took leave, much pleased with my reception. From a certain point of view, the socialist mayor of Roubaix is one of the most interesting personalities in France.

Roubaix has been endowed by the State with a handsome museum, library, technical and art school, the latter for young men only. These may belong to any nationality, and obtain their professional or artistic training free of charge. The exhibition of students' work sufficiently proclaims the excellence of the teaching. Here we saw very clever studies from the living model, a variety of designs, and, most interesting of all, fabrics prepared, dyed, and woven entirely by the students.

The admirably arranged library is open to all, and we were courteously shown some of

its choicest treasures. These are not bibliographical curiosities, but albums containing specimens of Lyons silks, a marvellous display of taste and skill. Gems, butterflies' wings, feathers of tropical birds are not more brilliant than these hues, while each design is thoroughly artistic, and in its way an achievement.

The picture gallery contains a good portrait of the veteran song-writer Nadaud, author of the immortal song: "Je ne verrai jamais Carcassonne," a native and, strange to say, inhabitant of Roubaix. I say, strange, because it seems a place in which none but manufacturers and artisans would elect to live.<sup>1</sup> Many Germans and Belgians, engaged in commerce, spend years here, going away when their fortunes are made. More advantageous to the place are those capitalists who take root, identifying themselves with local interests. Such is the case with a large English firm at Croix, who have founded a Protestant church and schools for their work-people.

The great drawback to Roubaix is a certain latitude I have never observed elsewhere. Here in broad daylight vice flaunts the street, naked and unashamed, or rather I should say, spends its existence in hovering between Lille and its adjacent towns.

As a set off to this statement let me record

<sup>1</sup> Nadaud died just after my visit.

the spectacle presented by the museum on Sunday afternoon during the brilliant weather of April 1893. What most struck me was the presence of poorly-dressed boys ; they evidently belonged to the least prosperous working-class, and came in by twos and threes. Nothing could equal the good behaviour of these lads, or their interest in everything. Many young shopwomen were also there, and as usual a large contingent of soldiers and recruits.

Few shops remained open after mid-day, except one or two very large groceries, at which fresh vegetables were sold. It is pleasant to note a gradual diminution of Sunday labour throughout France.

The celebration of May Day, which date occurred soon after my visit, was not calculated either to alarm the Republic or the world in general. It was a monster manifestation in favour of the Three Eights, and I think few of us, were we suddenly transformed into Roubaix machinists, would not speedily become Three Eighters as well.

At five o'clock in the morning the firing of cannon announced the annual "Fête du Travail" or workmen's holiday, not accorded by Act of Parliament, but claimed by the people as a legitimate privilege.

Unwonted calm prevailed in certain quarters.

Instead of men, women, boys, and girls pouring by tens of thousands into the factories, the streets leading to them were empty. In one or two cases, where machinery had been set in motion and doors opened, public opinion immediately effected a stoppage of work. Instead, therefore, of being imprisoned from half-past five in the morning till seven or eight at night, the entire Roubaisien population had freed itself to enjoy "a sunshine holiday." Such a day cannot be too long, and at a quarter past seven vast crowds had collected before the Hôtel de Ville.

Here a surprise was in store for the boldest Three Eighter going. The tricolour had been hoisted down, and replaced, not by a red flag, but by a large transparency, showing the following device in red letters upon a white ground :—

FÊTE INTERNATIONALE DU TRAVAIL,

1er Mai 1893.

Huit Heures du Travail,

Huit Heures du Loisir,

Huit Heures du Repos.<sup>1</sup>

The mayor in undress, that is to say in garments of every day, having surveyed these preparations, returned to his *estaminet*, the Plat d'Or, and there folded his newspapers as usual for the day's distribution.

<sup>1</sup> Translation—International festival of labour : eight hours' work, eight hours' leisure, eight hours' repose.

In the meantime the finishing touch was put to other decorations, consisting of flags, devices, and red drapery, everywhere the Three Eights being conspicuous.

A monster procession was then formed, headed by the Town Council and a vast number of bands. There was the music of the Fire Brigade, the socialist brass band, the children's choir, the Choral Society of Roubaix, the Franco-Belgian Choral Society, and many others. Twenty thousand persons took part in this procession, the men wearing red neckties and a red flower in their button-holes, the forty-seven groups of the workmen's federation bearing banners, all singing, bands playing, drums beating, cannons firing, as they went.

At mid-day the defile was made before the Hôtel de Ville, and delegates of the different socialist groups were formally received by the mayor and deputy-mayors, wearing their tricolour scarves of office.

I must say the mayor's speech was a model of conciseness, good sense, and, it must be added, courtesy; addressing himself first to his fellow-townswomen, then to his fellow-townsmen, he thanked the labour party for the grandiose celebration of the day, dwelt on the determination of the municipal council to watch over the workmen's interests, then begged all to enjoy



themselves thoroughly, taking care to maintain the public peace.

Toasts were drunk, the mayor's health with especial enthusiasm, but when at the stroke of noon he waved the tricolour and an enormous number of pigeons were let loose, not to be fired at but admired as they flew away in all directions, their tricolour ribbons fluttering, the general delight knew no bounds. "Long live our mayor," resounded from every mouth, "Vive le citoyen Carrette!"

The rest of the day was devoted to harmless, out-of-door amusements: a balloon ascent, on the car being conspicuous in red, "Les trois huit," concerts, gymnastic contests, finally dancing and illuminations.

Thus ended the first of May 1893, in what may be called the capital of socialist France.

## IV

### DEPARTMENT : PAS-DE-CALAIS

ST. OMER is a clean, well-built, and sleepy little town, with some fine old churches. The mellow tone of the street architecture, especially under a burning blue sky, is very soothing ; all the houses have a yellowish or pinkish hue.

The town abounds in convents and seminaries, and the chief business of well-to-do ladies seems that of going to church. In the cathedral are many votive tablets to " Our Lady of Miracles "—one of the numerous miracle-working Virgins in France. Here we read the thanksgiving of a young man miraculously preserved throughout his four years' military service ; there, one records how, after praying fervently for a certain boon, after many years the Virgin had granted his prayer. Parents commemorate miraculous favours bestowed on their children ; indeed, at Lourdes itself Mariolatry can hardly go further.

The ancient ramparts are in course of

demolition, and the belt of boulevards which are to replace them will be a great improvement. The town is protected by newly-constructed works. Needless to say, it possesses a public library, on the usual principle—one citizen, one book—a museum, and small picture gallery. The population is 21,000.

I was cordially received by a friend's friend, foremost resident in the place, and owner of a large distillery. As usual, the private dwelling, with coach-house, stables, and garden, adjoined the business premises. The *genièvre* or gin, so called from the juniper used in flavouring it, here manufactured, is a choice liqueur, not the cheap intoxicant of our own public-houses. Liqueurs are always placed with coffee on French breakfast-tables. Every one takes a teaspoonful as a help to digestion.

French people are greatly astonished at the absence of liqueurs in England. The excellence of French digestions generally would not seem to discredit the habit. In the fabrication of gin here only the corn of rye is used, and in small quantities, the juniper berry; it is ready for drinking in six months, although improved by keeping. I also saw curaçoa in its various stages. The orange peel used in the manufacture of this liqueur is soaked in alcohol for four months.

My object, however, was to see the high

farming on an extensive scale for which this region is famous. Accordingly my host, accompanied by his amiable wife, placed themselves, their carriage, and time at my disposal, and we set out for a long round.

In harvest time the aspect of the country must be one of extreme richness. The enormous sweeps of corn, clover, and beetroot have no division from each other or the road ; no hedges are to be seen, and not a tree in the middle of the crops, few trees, indeed, anywhere. Everywhere, on this 17th of April, the corn was a month ahead of former seasons, and, in spite of the long drought, very flourishing.

The first farm visited consists of 360 hectares (just upon 900 acres), all in the highest cultivation, and conducted strictly on the footing of a large industrial concern, with offices, counting-house, carpenters', saddlers', and wheelwrights' shops, smithies, mills and machinery, every agricultural process down to grinding the corn being performed on the premises, and by workmen in the employ of the owner.

As we enter these vast premises, and hear the buzz of machinery, we feel the complete prosaicism of rustic life. The farmhouse scenes of my own childhood in Suffolk, the idyllic descriptions of George Eliot, no more resemble actualities than the poetic spinning-wheel of

olden times the loom of latest invention. Utility is the object aimed at, incontestibly with great results, but in effect unromantic as Chicago. It is high farming made to pay. All was bustle and activity as we made the round of the premises, beginning with the vast machinery and workshops. These walled-in buildings, divided into two portions, each covering three-quarters of an acre, reminded me of nothing so much as of the caravanserais of Algerian travel twenty-five years ago. Once the doors are bolted none can enter, yet to render security doubly sure dogs are chained up in every corner—we will hope, let loose at night.

In the first square is a beautiful duck-pond, and beyond a large space covered with farmhouse manure to the depth of a yard or two—happy hunting-ground of cocks and hens. Forty milch cows are kept, the milk being sent to St. Omer. The arrangement for distribution showed ingenuity. The milk is sent out in bottles placed upright in open boxes constructed for the purpose, each bottle being exchanged for empties daily. By this means a great saving of time and, without doubt of milk also, is effected. All possibility of fraud is also guarded against.

The cows are, for the most part, stabled in consequence of the scarcity of pasture. Their staple food, here as elsewhere, is beetroot pulp

mixed with chopped straw and grain. The milk tastes well, but I should doubt its wholesomeness for young children. Cows, indeed, are kept for the purpose of utilising this residuum of the crushed beetroot. Both cows and beasts fattening for market were lying down in what seemed rather close quarters, each attached to a chain. It seems to me that animals never get enough air in these large farms. The sheep were even worse off. They are here shut up in sheds and littered like pigs, one layer of straw being laid upon another in order to increase the quantity of manure. The poor animals seemed ill at ease in the sheds, in which they have spent the winter, and which they will shortly quit for the slaughter-house. Of course there can be no question as to the superiority of grass-fed mutton, but without pastures, what is the farmer to do? There is, perforce must be, a hard, prosaic reason for everything in farming made to pay. Horse-rearing is also carried on, and we saw some pretty foals of mixed breed, the Boulonnais or Boulogne predominating, a strong, large-made, handsome bay, admirable for carriage use. My host's handsome pair, like as twins, carried us throughout our long round, at the same pace, never requiring the whip. In a former volume I animadverted upon the badness of cab-driving in some French towns. Here it is quite otherwise.

Whenever I was driven by private owners the horses seemed left to themselves, the whip a mere appendage.

The splendid wheat, clover, bean, and rye crops attested the excellence of the farming. Dovetailing into these enormous fields were small patches of peasant owners or tenants, all without division or apparent boundary.

In the villages I was struck by the tidy appearance of the children coming out of school. The usual verdict on peasant proprietors hereabouts was that they do not accumulate, neither are they in want. Very little, if any, beggary meets the eye, either in town or country. We then drove to the chateau, with its English grounds, of the Vicomte de —, friend of my host, and ardent admirer of England and English ways. This gentleman looked, indeed, like an English squire, and spoke our tongue. As an illustration of his lavish method of doing things, I mention a quantity of building stone lately ordered from Valenciennes. This stone, for the purpose of building offices, had cost £800. In this part of France clerks and counting-houses seem an indispensable feature of farm premises. An enormous bell for summoning the work-people to work or meals is always conspicuous. The whole thing has a commercial aspect.

Here we saw some magnificent animals, among

these a prize bull of Flemish breed. It was said to be very fierce, and on this account had a ring in its nose. This cruel custom is now, I believe, prohibited here by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. On the other hand, I was glad to find the Vicomte a member of the kindred society in Paris, and he assured me that he was constantly holding his green card of membership over offenders *in terrorem*.

We hardly expect a rich aristocrat to make utility the first object in his agricultural pursuits. High farming was nevertheless here the order of the day. Here I had the satisfaction of seeing sheep on bits of pasture.

We next drove to Clairmarais, a village some miles off in quite another direction, coming in sight of magnificent forests. Our errand was to the ancient Cistercian abbey, now the property of a capitalist, and turned into the business premises of his large farm. Of the original monastery, founded in 1140, hardly a trace remains. Abutting on the outer wall is the chapel, and before it a small enclosed flower-garden full of wallflowers and flowering shrubs, a bit of prettiness welcome to the eye. Just beyond, too, was an old-fashioned, irregularly planted orchard, with young cattle grazing under the bloom-laden trees, the turf dazzlingly bright, but less so than the young corn and rye, now ready for first harvesting.



The vaulted kitchens with vast fireplaces are relics of the ancient abbey, and even now form most picturesque interiors. At a long wooden table in one sat a blue-bloused group drinking cider out of huge yellow mugs,—scene for a painter. Another, fitted up as a dairy, was hardly less of a picture. On shelves in the dark, antiquated chamber lay large, red-carthen pans full of cream for cheese-making. The brown-robed figure of a lay brother would have seemed appropriate in either place.

Outside these all was modernisation and hard prose. We saw the shepherd returning with his sheep from the herbage, the young lambs bleating pitifully in an inner shed. It is the custom here to send the sheep afield during the day, the lambs meantime being fed on hay. Here again, I should say, is a commercial mistake. The lamb of pasture-fed animals must be incontestably superior. Humanity here seems on the side of utilitarianism. Who can say? Perhaps the inferiority of French meat in certain regions arises from this habit of stabling cattle and sheep. The drive from Clairmarais to St. Omer took us through a quite different and much more attractive country. We were now in the marais, an amphibious stretch of country, cut up into gardens and only accessible by tiny canals. It is a small Holland. This vast stretch of market garden, intersected by waterways

just admitting the passage of a boat, is very productive. Three pounds per hectare is often paid in rent. The early vegetables, conveyed by boat to St. Omer, are largely exported to England. Every inch of ground is turned to account, the turf-bordered, canal-bound gardens making a pretty scene, above the green levels intersected by gleaming water the fine towers of St. Omer clearly outlined against the brilliant sky.

The English colony of former days vanished on the outbreak of the last war, not to return. A few English Catholics still prepare for the priesthood here, and eighty more are pursuing their studies at Douai, under the charge of English Benedictines. "Why," impatiently asked Arthur Young in 1788, "are Catholics to emigrate in order to be ill-educated abroad, instead of being allowed institutions that would educate them well at home?"

The disabilities he reprobates have long since been removed, but English-speaking seminarists still flock to Douai.

Here I close this agricultural and industrial tour in Picardy and French Flanders, regions so near home, yet so unfamiliar to most of us. I append a few facts concerning high farming made to pay. The figures are supplied me by a leading agriculturist in the Pas-de-Calais.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Note 2, High Farming.



## PART II

PROVINCES: SAVOY AND DAUPHINÉ



# I

## DEPARTMENT : SAVOY

IN his triumphal progress through this region in 1892, M. Carnot touchingly and poetically alluded to the historic sympathies of Savoy for France.

“Can we conceive,” said the honoured president, “a more moving occasion than that now bringing us together, an entire population celebrating the centenary of its voluntary union with the French nation, when Savoy put her hand in that of France, saying, ‘I will be thine’? Can any of us without emotion recall those memorable days when the delegates of the Allobroges received from the Convention the following reply, ‘Generous Savoyards! In you we cherish friends and brothers, common interests make us one, you re-enter our family never more to be separated from us’?”

In 1792 Savoy was constituted a department under the name of Mont Blanc. By

the treaty of 1815 it again became subject to an Italian prince, but forty-five years later, for once and for all and by the universal vote of the people, Savoy became French, the ancient duchy forming two departments, Haute Savoie and Savoie, with Annecy and Chambéry for *chefs-lieux*. It seems a pity that the original name, Mont Blanc, was not adhered to from the first, as it would have convinced foreigners that Mont Blanc is really in French territory. I have heard the fact hotly contested, and by tourists who knew Switzerland well !

There are other errors equally difficult to combat, as we shall see, errors, moreover, shared by the French economist as well as by the English traveller.

Any one wishing to see a good deal of France in a short time cannot do better than take train from Paris to Dijon, thence proceed to Aix-les-Bains and Chambéry, from the latter place visit the neighbourhood of Grenoble, returning by way of Lyons.

The renowned sites of Savoy and Dauphiné I forbear to describe. No place in the world has been more frequently described than the Grande Chartreuse, and to English valetudinarians, Aix-les-Bains as a health resort is now hardly less familiar than Bath. But within easy reach of both we may study peasant property under a

variety of aspects, and realise the enormous development of rural and industrial France within the last twenty years.

Quitting the vineyards of the Côte d'Or, every year showing fresh conquests over the phylloxera, we traverse the rich, cattle-fed pastures of the Saône and Loire, then enter a wild picturesque region, tall chimneys of silk factories rising from rock-shut valleys. It is a grand journey, and if the traveller is fortunate enough to reach his destination on a moonlit night, he will not easily forget the first enchanting view of the lake of Bourget, in appearance, though not in reality, resembling our own "winding Winandermere, the river-lake," and of fairy-like loveliness under the silvery radiance. Nothing can be more poetic than this clear, beautifully-environed sheet of water, nothing can be more prosaic than the town whose fortunes it has helped to make.

Aix-les-Bains has other disadvantages besides that of inconceivably high prices. Here a purse full of gold is emptied almost as quickly as at the gambling table. We put on our spectacles and scan each item of our hotel bill, go again and again over the column of figures ; to no purpose. We cannot eat our cake and have it. Let only millionaires indulge even for a few days in the distractions of Aix-les-Bains !

It is curious that the site of this place should



so closely resemble Spa, Plombières, and other famous health resorts of the kind, more calculated, one would fancy, to put an end to ailing folks than to set them on their feet again. The town lies in a hollow, and during the summer is a veritable cauldron, a stew-pan, in which the unhappy tourist must remain imprisoned till evening, no possibility even of gazing at the glorious mountain scenery from his windows, every ray of the burning sun being necessarily excluded. One and all the world-renowned spas I have visited are alike in this respect, detestable from a climatic point of view. The invalid who has recourse to them is of valiant temper indeed.

On the other hand, the student of life and manners, the grim moralist, finds here the happiest hunting ground. At such cosmopolitan watering-places, the *grand monde* and the *demi-monde* so nicely imitate each other that it would tax the insight of a Balzac or the experience of a Javert to pronounce where the one ends and the other begins. In order, I presume, to avoid the possibility of a scandal, the service of the great hotels is performed by waiters advanced in years, men of aspect so frigid and austere that they might pass for monks who had gloriously overcome the temptations of St. Antony, a humorous contrast to the fashion and frivolity

around,—Vanity Fair in juxtaposition with a Trappist convent !

Half an hour's climb suffices to take us out of the gaudy, glittering, artificial world so superbly environed into the midst of pastoral scenery. Below we are among Parisian vanities, international flirtations, all kinds of time-killing ; marring the festive aspect of the streets the lugubrious processions of patients in their funereal pagodas ; above we are free to enjoy nature, here smiling and beneficent as in the South.

Winding upwards from the town towards the south-west we follow a beautifully sheltered road, an unbroken avenue of noble chestnuts leading to the village of Tresserve. From this point the view is very pretty : white villas, green foliage, and silvery gray mountains gleaming under a brilliant cloudless sky.

We cannot any more expect beautiful spots to escape vulgarisation in France than elsewhere. Just before my visit had been inaugurated one of those hideous mountain railways which have already robbed Vesuvius of its romance, and if practicable, we may be sure, would take Cook's tourists to the top of Mont Blanc.

Mont Revard, the most striking and picturesque summit over against Aix, is now accessible by railway. The line, five miles in extent, with two intermediate stations, certainly effects in one hour

an ascent requiring five on foot ; whether the gain is worth the loss, lovers of the picturesque and utilitarians must decide between them.

An afternoon spent at Tresserve suffices to undo many prejudices. The poverty of Savoy is still proverbial. Thus a professional agriculturist had written to me from another part of France : " Savoy you will find poorly cultivated and a poor country." Easier to understand are the arguments adduced by the late Lady Verney in her bulky volumes on French rural life. The fact is, as a lady farmer and large landowner I here visited explained to me, nowhere throughout France has agricultural and industrial progress been more startlingly rapid. " We have lived a century within the last twenty years," she said again and again, at the same time taking pains to put proof positive before my eyes. To sum up in a sentence, I was come to see the nakedness of the land, I found instead a veritable Goshen. Such an experience is what our French neighbours call *renversant*, inadequately translated by our own word antipodean,—the direct opposite of what has been anticipated.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Aix-les-Bains, of course the tourist season counts for something. Thus the population of Tresserve, in all about five hundred souls, are annually enriched during the summer to the extent of 180,000

francs, *i.e.* nearly £7000 : everything sells for a good price. But these are the earnings of a few months only, and are somewhat variable ; the general wellbeing and progress depend upon circumstances less capricious, above all, upon the indomitable laboriousness and thrift of the people. "Our peasants," said the same informant, "know the value of money, how much hard work goes to the earning of a hundred francs ; this renders them careful of spending a centime unnecessarily, and also of any investment but the safest. Our peasants poor?" she added laughingly ; "they are richer than ourselves. You shall see this afternoon a peasant who has just bought land of me to the value of 50,000 francs" (£2000) ; "you will see the country people everywhere well dressed, they eat butcher's meat, have comfortable furniture, never work on Sundays,—I repeat, we have witnessed within the last fifteen or twenty years the most tremendous changes for the better."

Before visiting her humbler neighbours this amiable and business-like chatelaine conducted me over her own farm, a beautiful property looking on the lake. Behind the château, which stood in a small, wooded park, fields and vineyards sloped down to the water's edge, the luxuriant crops testifying to the geniality of climate and richness of soil. Four crops of

clover are produced yearly, and raspberries and strawberries ripen out of doors from January to December. On this 16th of September ripe strawberries glowed under the trellised vines. Harvest was over long ago, the cleared cornfields being green with other crops. Maize is here cut in its green state for cows; beetroot, turnips, clover, lucerne, rye, and every variety of fruit and vegetable grows in equal profusion.

My attention was centred on the vines, here, as elsewhere, the main source of wealth, and trellised on trees or stocks after Italian fashion. With regard to the latter method my hostess used a word I have not been able to identify, although she assured me it was a Latin derivation. This is *vignote* applied to a trellised vine, and by which name such a vineyard is always called here. The stock is now preferred to trees, which exhaust the soil, and thus rob the vine of nourishment; but whether trailing on bare stems or leafy branches, the waxen foliage and rich purple clusters form a beautiful picture; one advantage of the system is its security against the phylloxera. As I shall afterwards have occasion to mention, in spite of the enormous quantities of grapes grown here, wine is largely imported into Savoy, home vintages not sufficing for the general needs. We are hardly surprised to learn that land fetches 12,000 francs and upwards per hectare, nor having

once visited Savoy, are we astonished to find that the peasants are ever ready to purchase.

A curious feature of land tenure throughout the department is this ; whilst arable land is either let on lease or farmed by its owner, vineyards are almost universally cultivated on the mi-fruits or half-profit system. A single hectare here, part of which is cultivated, part vineyard, maintains a family of several persons in ease.

Close to my hostess's beautifully situated domain are several peasant properties, one of these belonging to the recent purchaser of land from her before mentioned. The goodman was absent, but his wife received us with great affability. She was gathering grapes just outside the house, and immediately offered us some of the choicest. I have ever found hospitality characteristic of the peasant proprietor.

Chatting thus, we gazed upon an almost unimaginable picture of fertility and abundance. The original property of the pair had been the garden, one could hardly call it more, stretching before us, alleys of trellised vine, heavy with purple grapes, between each, narrow stretches of brilliant crops, here a bit of rye, there a patch of Indian corn, with small beds of artichoke, celery, salad, and other delicate vegetables. In front of the house was a flower-bed, and although the interior had a rough, uncared-for look in

English eyes, the furniture was solid and comfortable. The housewife, an elderly woman, had a bright cheerful face, and chatted with us about old times and new. "Yes, we have indeed seen changes within the last twenty years," she said, smilingly endorsing my hostess's conclusions. These worthy people had begun life upon next to nothing, their capital consisting of thrift and aboriosis.

Within a stone's throw we visited another farm, one of a group. Here we came upon one of those survivals so humorously bringing out the conservatism of the French peasant. The farmer's wife was making butter precisely as it was made before the Revolution, the so-called plunge or thump churn she used being, she assured us, a hundred years old. This primitive apparatus is a long, cylinder-shaped, wooden vessel, resembling a Japanese waste-paper basket, before which the churning sits manipulating the cream with a stick. The plunge or thump churn was formerly used in England. The interior certainly had not an inviting look, walls smoke-dried to the colour of bacon, unscoured floors, unswept hearth, and so on; but outside a little balcony was bright with flowers in pots, and flowers and creepers almost covered the front wall. The farm consisted of several hectares, on which four cows were kept, these being used for farm work as well. It is

curious that practical people should adhere to so mischievous a practice. The milk of a cow which has been working for hours under a burning sun cannot be fit for children, and the butter must suffer in quality. Let us hope that the departmental professors of agriculture will take up the matter. It is certainly one lying within their province.

These two instances will give a fair notion of peasant property in this part of Savoy, but on every side we find tiny holdings which do not come under that head—vineyards, gardens, and cornfields no larger than the croquet lawn of a suburban villa, with cottage attached, one and all the property of the tenant. Taking into consideration the fertility of the soil, the geniality of the climate, and the influx of wealthy strangers during the season, we need hardly wonder that the *Bureau de bienfaisance* or municipal charity has little to do. No beggars disgrace the streets of Aix-les-Bains, and no ragged, destitute vagrants beset the tourist. "Poverty-stricken Savoy" is one of the richest regions of France.



## II

### SAVOY (*continued*)

IN December 1789 Arthur Young wrote from Malataverne on his way to Chambéry: "I was sorry to see at the village a *carcan* or seigneurial standard erected, to which a chain and heavy iron collar are fastened, as a mark of the lordly arrogance of the nobility and the slavery of the people. I asked why it was not burned, with the horror it merited? The question did not excite the surprise I expected, and which it would have done before the French Revolution. This led to a conversation, by which I learned that in Upper Savoy there are no seigneurs, and the people are generally at their ease, possessing little properties, and the land, in spite of nature, almost as valuable as in the lower country, where the people are poor and ill at their ease. I demanded why? Because there are seigneurs everywhere."

"What a vice is it, and even a curse, that the gentry, instead of being the cherishers and

benefactors of their poor neighbours, should thus, by the abomination of feudal rights, prove mere tyrants. Will nothing but revolutions, which cause their châteaux to be burnt, induce them to give to reason and humanity what will be extorted by violence and commotion?" Nowadays the squirearchy of Savoy will tell you that the peasants are richer than themselves.

The first sight that greets the traveller on reaching Chambéry is the recently inaugurated statue of Savoy embracing the French flag. It is a refreshingly original and characteristic work of art, realism perhaps pushed to the extreme, yet here not out of place. The gigantic female figure whose arms so passionately enfold the tricolour represents the genius of Savoy under homely guise. We have here a peasant woman, but of heroic type, one who could not only lead the plough, but if necessary shoulder a musket in defence of the fatherland.

Before its re-annexation, Savoy was French in feeling and sympathy. It is now rapidly becoming French in point of material progress and wellbeing. The capital is a very handsome town with newly-created boulevards and public buildings in striking contrast to the malodorous, filthy, blind alleys and passages which still disgrace it. I arrived just after the triumphal progress of the President, the streets were still gaily decorated,

the triumphal arches had not been pulled down ; I arrived, too, when people were dropping down dead of cholera in Hamburg, and Havre was severely visited by the plague. Yet neither a presidential visit nor a cholera panic had led to any cleansing of the back slums. A French lady, my travelling companion, came back after a stroll, feeling quite sick from the foul smells. "C'est écœurant" (it is sickening !), she said. (I always prefer to quote French rather than English opinion on such matters whenever I can.) But who thinks of cholera or typhoid with the prospect of seeing Madame de Warens' garden and of eliciting a note, however faint, from Jean Jacques' harpsichord ? I love Arthur Young for his description of Rousseau's good—or evil—genius. "There was something so deliciously amiable in her character, in spite of her frailties—her constant gaiety and good humour, her tenderness and humanity, her farming speculations, but above all her love of Rousseau, have written her name among the few whose memories are connected with us by ties more easily felt than described." Certain natures, and hers was one, which remain pagan in the midst of the most fastidious civilisation ; and, however great their offences against accepted ethics and conventionalities, gloriously do they shine by comparison with many who have never sinned against either !

4. Les Charmettes will doubtless eventually become the property of Chambéry, like the Goethe house at Weimar and other historic dwellings, to remain a museum. It is enchantingly situated ; from the back windows commanding, across vineyard and garden, a lovely view of chestnut woods, valley, and gray glistening mountain range. But there is something uncanny in the faded tapestries and bed-hangings, almost dropping to pieces, still exhibited here. The carved oak furniture, the portraits—above all, the piano—should by all means be retained, but not tattered, threadbare curtains. I should prefer, too, not to be shown the little oratory in which the poor woman said her prayers after shameless self-indulgence. The harpsichord that we read of so often in the *Confessions*, still gives out a just perceptible melody, that too evoking a pensive mood. One cheerful thought, at least, we bring away from Les Charmettes. Let cynics rail as they may, there is a touch of poetry in human nature, the whole lump is leavened by the saving grace of romance ; witness the stream of pilgrims to this shrine, all sorts and conditions of men on holidays wending their way thither. People may not care a straw for philosophy or literature, Jean Jacques' theories and style may be a dead letter to the masses ; when did a love story fail to interest old or young, wise or simple ? The farm

attached to the house has been let on the half-profit system to members of a single family for a hundred years. Everything, down to poultry and garden produce, is equally divided, the proprietor furnishing land, implements, stock, and money for improvement, the farmer all necessary labour. Many cheese-making dairies in these parts are managed on the same principle, one instance more, if any were needed, of the almost inexhaustible variety of land tenure to be found throughout France. As the pages of the present volume show, far from the country being cut up into minute parcels of land, these by a gradual process of subdivision dwindling to infinitesimal proportions, large areas remain precisely as they were at the time of the Revolution, and that tenant farming, far from being an anomaly on French soil, is to be found in every department. Next day I drove in quite an opposite direction to see some farms. The weather was perfect and the scene one of great brilliance and beauty; dazzlingly green the richly cultivated valley, from which rose gently undulated hills, above these soft violet mountain range and deepest azure sky. Chambéry is not rock-hemmed as Aix-les-Bains, but lies in a broad opening between chain and chain. We can breathe at our ease here, and the abundance of foliage tempers the burning heat. Veteran walnut and chestnut trees shade the road, whilst

the trellised vineyards everywhere rest the eye.

Two special features characterise the agriculture. In the first place, we are in a tobacco-growing country ; in the second, in one of a curiously mixed tenure. A good deal of the land is let on lease at a fixed rent, that portion of it devoted to the vine being invariably cultivated on the half-profit system. Land near Chambéry is rented at the rate of two hundred francs per hectare. In remoter districts of course the rate is much lower. Ten hectares may be accepted as the average holding, large numbers, however, consisting of only one or two. Wine, corn, and tobacco are the principal crops. The former, as I have before mentioned, is quite inadequate to the needs of the department. This accounts for the fact of non-importation into England of wines equal in taste and quality to excellent Burgundy or Bordeaux.

We drew up before a group of farm buildings, the foremost of which was gaily festooned with sky-blue tablets. At first I imagined that these decorations had something to do with the President's recent visit, but no such thing. Our driver had brought us to a prize farm, the objects in question being medals obtained from time to time at various agricultural shows. The farmer was busily at work with his men, but good-naturedly

left them to take us around. "Nothing is easier," was his reply to our driver, who explained that the ladies wished to see his farm. He was a slightly built, handsome man with regular features, dark hair and eyes, and he received us with the ease of a well-bred civilian, as free from familiarity as from stiffness. After pointing to the medals, of which he was evidently very proud, he showed us his cows of Tarentaise breed. La Tarentaise is a district of Upper Savoy, and his oxen, four in number, were kept for ploughing. Then we inspected the crops.

His farm was in reality one vast vineyard, but as unlike the vineyards of Burgundy or the Gironde as could well be. My companion, who had never been in Italy, became almost breathless from admiration. "Look, only look," she cried again and again, counting and re-counting the bunches of grapes on a single stock, hardly believing the profusion before her eyes.

It was indeed a marvellous picture of luxuriance and fertility. Between each row of trellised vine were strips of vegetation broad as a carriage way, beds of the graceful tobacco plant, clover, lucerne, sainfoin, Indian corn, potatoes or other vegetables planted immediately about the stocks, not an inch of ground wasted, not a glimpse of sky between vine and vine, so impenetrable the clustered fruit and foliage.

Burgundy, the home of my travelling companion, and the part of France I know best, is extraordinarily productive, but as a veritable cornucopia not for a moment to be compared to Savoy. And even a French authority had told me I was about to visit "a poor region, and one poorly cultivated !"

We always find something to learn about the vine, and here some curious particulars may be mentioned. Some of these plants were a hundred years old ; the larger proportion, however, consisted of grafts from American stocks, those of ten years' growth being in splendid condition. We saw one enormous vine, in appearance resembling a large shrub, from which grafts are taken. The American vine, as I have before observed, is not attacked by the phylloxera, but the bluish-green appearance of the vineyards here and there betokened another enemy. This is the mildew, combated by means of sulphates and other chemical processes. Here, as in the neighbourhood of Aix-les-Bains, vineyards are being created, and no wonder, considering the demand for home-grown wine. How much French wine reaches other countries in its pure state may be judged from its dearness in France. Here good *vin ordinaire* of native growth fetches fifty centimes the hectolitre, and the choicer kind from three to five francs a bottle. Wherever you go



you find French wines dearer at home than abroad. If the excellent red wine of Algeria could be brought into the English market, we should become independent of cheap, artificial clarets.

Having thanked our obliging host, we drove a little farther, finding at the next farm much new matter to interest us. The farmer was just off to the fields, but on hearing our errand dropped his spade and declared himself entirely at our service. It is noteworthy that I have never in a single instance encountered hesitation or reluctance, much less a downright rebuff, from the French farmer. Alike rich and poor, cultivator of several hundred acres or of a single one, have ever received me courteously and afforded all the information in their power to give.

Our present conductor was a young, good-looking man, in build, complexion, and feature greatly resembling the other, and as affable and communicative. His farm, also of ten hectares, was hired on lease, and formed one of a group of three, the homesteads being in close proximity to the owner's château. A money rent was paid for, arable land and pasture, the vineyards being cultivated on the half-profit system. Perhaps this system may be explained by the expense and excessive laboriousness of vine-dressing. Only trained hands, who receive high wages, are

employed in the numerous delicate processes. Here the crop that chiefly attracted our attention was tobacco.<sup>1</sup> As every one knows, tobacco is a State monopoly in France. Folks may cultivate a plant or two in their gardens by way of ornament, but that is all. Every leaf grown by the farmer is grown for the State, and none must be withheld, under severe penalties. Ornament of the parterre, the tobacco is shorn of its beauty when intended for commerce ; the central leaves are cut out, and the plant is never allowed to flower. It is a most remunerative crop, the net returns averaging those of the vine, *i.e.* the maximum of agricultural profits. No farmer can cultivate tobacco without permission. The small fields or patches of brilliant, yellowish green were interspersed with a variety of homelier and more familiar growths, buckwheat in full flower on this year's cleared corn land ; clover also in blossom, the fourth annual crop, beetroot and cabbage for cattle. Barley does not flourish here.

The farm buildings of our second host also showed a goodly number of blue medallions. • With no little pride he showed us a beautiful prize cow, of the same Tarentaise breed. Such an animal is worth from 1500 to 2000 francs. Several cows were kept, but not worked on the farm. "I disapprove of that custom altogether,"

<sup>1</sup> See Note 3, Tobacco.

said the master. Here calves were reared instead of being handed over to the butcher at the end of a few weeks. In Normandy and Brittany these unfortunate little creatures live, or rather endure ill-treatment, for about a month, and are then put to death. I saw no evidence of cruelty to animals during my stay in Savoy and in Dauphiné; on the contrary, the country people seemed fond of their cattle.

Our young farmer was also a bee-keeper, his bee-hives standing amid flowers and flowering shrubs. Apiculture, as bee-keeping is called, forms a very important branch of rural economies in France.<sup>1</sup> The Society of Apiculturists is under State patronage, and at the exhibition of insects held two years ago in Paris, hundreds of specimens of honey, wax, and other products, besides model hives and living bees, were shown. This department alone in 1889 numbered 1500 bee-rearers. The regions most favoured in the matter of wild flowers will, of course, be honey-making districts, but everybody who can, keeps bees.

The spacious, well-built farmhouse fronted the garden, and had a cheerful, prosperous look. The same may be said of the mistress and her children, who came forward to greet us. They were as well dressed and neat as the same class would be in England. Here the new barrel-shaped

<sup>1</sup> See Note 4, Apiculture.

churn of modern make was used, not the kind of antiquated vessel I had seen near Aix-les-Bains.

After much interesting conversation we drove home, on our way being pleasantly reminded of the general affability. By the roadside women and children were busily employed in gathering and picking up walnuts. They would advance whenever we stopped to look on and offer us a handful. When folks are sunk in wretchedness and vice after the manner of Zola's peasants, they do not quit their work to chat with the passing stranger and offer gifts, however trifling. The French peasant is represented as sordid and grasping. I repeat, I have ever found him hospitality itself.

It must not of course be supposed that from end to end the ancient kingdom of Savoy is a land of Goshen. Many mountainous regions are barren and sparsely inhabited, and from these still emerge the chimney sweep and his troop,—wretched little beings, "farmed," as used to be the case in England fifty years ago. I have often encountered little chimney sweeps in the Jura, and elsewhere. At one town of the above-mentioned department I was assured that the soot-begrimed youngsters were the best customers of pastry-cooks and sweet-shops. This may well be, as they beg audaciously, and by their wretched condition excite the general pity. It is certainly

matter for wonder that this servitude in France has survived every other ; but legislation is now taking in hand the subject of juvenile labour. The little victims of Savoy will surely not be overlooked.

From the barren mountain regions also large numbers expatriate themselves for a certain number of years, returning to purchase a bit of land with their savings. It has been computed that on an average 25,000 Savoyards quit the country, and that upwards of two millions of francs yearly are brought back.<sup>1</sup>

Besides its slate and marble quarries, mineral waters, beds of anthracite, iron and lead mines ; besides its silk, gauze, and watch manufactures, almost every town and village of the two departments possesses its special article of commerce. Thus at one place bandages and other surgical appliances are made, at another wooden cooking utensils, at a third packing-paper, at a fourth wadding. Wherever we go, we find that combination of rural and industrial activity to which we have no parallel at home, and which so largely accounts for prosperity here.

I must not quit Chambéry without acknowledging a graceful act of hospitality, to be set against the extortionate charges of Aix-les-Bains. A French lady had accompanied me on this

<sup>1</sup> See E. Réclus, *Géographie*, p. 346.

journey, whose husband was on friendly terms with the proprietor of our hotel. We were assigned the best rooms, every possible attention was shown us, but on taking leave we could not obtain a bill! an unwonted, I may say, an unprecedented dilemma. I insisted, or rather endeavoured to insist, on discharging at least my own share of the expenses. But no, "Madame is a friend of our friend, Madame must permit us to treat her as such," was the reply, and in spite of all I could say or do I was not allowed to pay a farthing.

Here I will take occasion to observe, that let tourists grumble as they may, hotel-keepers seldom make a fortune in France. I am not speaking of the great health-resorts, where a certain season and high charges may enrich a few, but of the ordinary run of proprietors, who depend upon ordinary custom. The cost of a large staff of servants all the year round is a very large deduction from profits; there is also even an element of risk. A new line of railway will ruin a hotel dependent on tourists, whilst • fashion, caprice, medical puffs, and other circumstances render the prosperity of spas and winter resorts very precarious.

The great reproach to be urged against provincial hotels in France is the want of sanitation and the noisiness. Sanitary arrangements,

telephones, thickly carpeted stairs and passages, smoking-rooms, and thick walls, all these things are needed to make them comfortable. As a rule, partition walls are no better defence against noise than the paper dividing Japanese rooms.

On the whole, I should say that less progress has been made in hotel keeping than in anything else in France during the last hundred years. The national amiability most probably accounts for this stagnation. I have many times travelled with French friends, and have never heard them grumble at anything unless at a disappointing dinner. Discomforts English folks anathematise are taken as a matter of course. Thus hotels only frequented by French visitors remain unimproved from year to year and from generation to generation, whilst wherever we go we work reforms.

### III

#### DEPARTMENTS: ISÈRE, HAUTES ALPES

WE are prepared for the savage grandeur of the Grande Chartreuse by our journey from Chambéry to Grenoble. The scenery is an ascending scale of wildness and beauty, from the moment we quit Rousseau's valley till we reach the capital of Dauphiné, now a frontier town armed to the teeth. We do not get here the noble river-side view which inspired Turner, yet the aspect of the city is very imposing, above gleaming white houses and interminable avenues reaching far into the suburbs, stretching from east to west as a majestic curtain, the continuous, unbroken range of snow-capped Alps.

Those lofty mountain fastnesses no longer take the place of artificial defence. Since the Franco - Prussian war Grenoble, with Dijon, Besançon, Montbéliard, and other towns has been in more than one respect completely metamorphosed. Within the last twenty-two years



the rugged escarpments towering above the chief town of the Isère bristle with forts, no less than eight protecting both banks of the river. These tremendous works are hardly in keeping with the smiling beauty of the valley below, but the traveller in France grows accustomed to such contrasts; scenes of peace and fertility, only secured by that militarism which is their antipodes. Whilst millions have been spent upon the sinews of war, Grenoble has also been lavishly endowed with the arts of peace. For a population of 50,000 and odd souls, the public library provides books at the rate of three volumes per head, to say nothing of its magnificent collection of illuminated and other rare manuscripts, specimens of antique bindings, and autographs. Under the same roof, all royally housed, is a picture gallery, containing some good canvases old and new, besides sculpture, antiquities, *faïence*, medals. The natural history collections are appended to the Botanical Gardens. I should like to hear of any town of the same size either in England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales as well off in these respects. That such opportunities are not neglected the following fact will show. During my visit in 1892, two rooms were entirely given up to the works in oil and water-colour of local artists. The pictures, many of them work of amateurs, showed a technical skill

and feeling for art often glaringly deficient in our own exhibitions. Of course the art schools to be found in all large French towns, and open to both sexes free of charge, account for much of the artistic excellence found throughout the country. But the departmental picture gallery, decreed by the Convention, is of still more importance. Even the townling of a few thousand inhabitants is an art-centre on a small scale. New Grenoble is fast supplanting the old, yet the city seen from the quays must look much as when Turner saw it nearly a century ago, or even Gray, years before. The majestic mountain range, rampart upon rampart of deep purple with silvery crests, remains unchanged ; now as then the Isère flows in a broad bright stream by green banks and tall, many-storeyed houses ; Grenoble has been beautified, enlarged, made to bristle with forts, that is all. Not Nantes itself, the capital of Western France, rises more majestically above the Loire. An hour suffices to take you into the heart of the country, that fertile valley of Gresivaudan of which I heard so much. I had been obligingly furnished with introductions to two farmers, and found both at home. The first cultivated his own land, which in consequence is called *une propriété*. The second hired on lease, his occupation being called *une ferme*. I particularise this distinction, as landowners even

on a small scale do not like being called *fermiers*.

My first host, a wealthy bachelor, I found working with his men in his shirt-sleeves—the blouse does not seem greatly in favour here—he most good-naturedly threw down his rake, and offered to show me round. He was a middle-aged man, portly, jovial, and very communicative, had visited Algeria, was indeed a man of the world. Curiously enough, that an English lady should feel interested in French farming did not astonish him nearly so much as the fact that she was unmarried! I suppose there are no single women in Dauphiné, and perhaps no marriageable girls either! Elsewhere during this journey a friend, a young professor, had explained to me that he could not marry, for a very excellent reason, “There are no young ladies in my department,” he said.

French girls marry so early here that the condition of girlhood, like certain uses of the aorist tense in Greek grammar, may be called momentary, a present immediately becoming a past. Be this as it may, my host confided to me “that he had only the day before married off and dowered his twelfth and only remaining niece, giving a dinner and ball in honour of the event, and throughout our long conversation the burden of his song was ever, “So you are not married?”

His property was very conveniently situated, his fifteen hectares, or thirty-seven acres, lying all together, no hedge or boundary dividing field from field, no neighbour's patch coming as a wedge between. The granary door showed a veritable garland of prize medals, these accorded for cattle as well as crops. From floor to roof the building was piled with corn, garnered in July. Some curious contradictions struck me here. This farmer's fifteen hectares by no means represented his wealth, he owed land elsewhere, and possessed funded property, yet in some ways things were behindhand, as in Brittany. The heavy, old-fashioned wooden plough, for instance, which might have greeted the eyes of Arthur Young a hundred years ago—or for the matter of that Father Abraham! Artificial manure is not yet resorted to; on the other hand, corn is threshed by steam. Here too the seven or eight milch cows, of the same Tarentaise breed, were used on the land, no horses being kept for that purpose. The milk is sent to Grenoble, and it never seems to strike buyer or seller that the milk of cows which have been toiling for hours in the heat of the day can no longer be wholesome for ordinary purposes, least of all for young children.

Hemp is grown here in small quantities for spinning at home, another survival we should hardly look for in the immediate neighbourhood

of Grenoble. The fourth crop of clover was being got in, other crops were sainfoin, beetroot, maize, cabbages for cattle, and potatoes. The land was clean and well cultivated, but without one source of wealth—a severe hailstorm in July of the present year had ruined the vineyards throughout the department. Having pressed me most cordially to take wine, milk, or anything else he could offer, my host politely conducted me to the carriage. To the last moment he expressed his surprise that his visitor should be unmarried. Perhaps demoiselles of a certain age shut themselves up in a convent.

I next visited a tenant farm of twenty hectares, the occupier also farming five more of his own. He was a striking contrast to my late jovial and voluble host; grave, handsome, picturesque, he looked as if he had walked out of a mediæval picture. In spite of his everyday dress and evidently laborious life, there was here not a trace of vulgarity or commonness. Especially noteworthy was his clear enunciation and well-worded, well-thought-out speech. The first had been an easy-going, perhaps self-indulgent old bachelor, the second was a hard-working, anxious father of a family. He invited me indoors and introduced me to his daughter, a neatly dressed blithe damsel, evidently accustomed to hard work. The house was very ancient and primitive in

construction, the walls of the enormous kitchen were blackened with the smoke of generations, and it contained no furniture except what was absolutely necessary,—long table, deal benches, oak presses, and cooking utensils. The bedrooms were upstairs. At some distance from the front door a corner of the vast vegetable garden was devoted to flowers. Market gardening enters largely into farming here, most farmers near Grenoble devoting some land to fruit and vegetables for sale.

I first visited the neat-house and stable, to inspect the horse kept for my host's own use, cows, and calf. What interested me more than anything he could tell me about them was their owner's behaviour.

"I never allow any one to strike or ill-treat my animals," he said, as he caressed one gentle creature after another. Much interesting information this dignified old peasant gave me, which I will repeat in his own words: "The hailstorm of last July ruined my vineyards," he said, "but the corn harvest was abundant; on my own land I got thirty-five hectolitres of wheat per hectare,<sup>1</sup> but in spite of such abundant crops I could not have farmed at a profit of late years without deduction of rent. You see," he added, smiling gravely, "I am the father of a family, my elder children

<sup>1</sup> About eleven coombs per acre.

came before we had gratuitous education in France ; I was therefore put to a good deal of expense for their education ; then I had to provide my daughters with a dowry, and set up my sons in business. I am now an old man, and shall soon retire, leaving the management of this farm to my elder son, myself cultivating the bit of land that belongs to me."

"You are up betimes, I daresay ?" I asked.

"At five o'clock all the year round, and keep at it till ten at night ; in summer, however, we rest from twelve till two on account of the great heat, and unless in case of urgent necessity no one works on Sunday. But the master's eye is ever needed." He further explained that his farm-servants were boarded and lodged in the house, and that his wife and unmarried daughter supervised the dairy. "We were all invited to a ball last night—given by the neighbour you have just visited in honour of his niece's wedding, but my wife and I are too old for such entertainments ; our girl went with friends, and was not back till four o'clock this morning."

I afterwards learned that both ball and mid-day banquet had been held at the suburban annexe of the first hotel of Grenoble. Upwards of sixty persons sat down to table. Here is an instance of the conviviality and lavishness of the French peasant, described by some writers as a grovelling

miser. I only regretted that I had not arrived before these gay doings, for most assuredly I should have been invited. After a stroll round the farm, which was cultivated on the same plan as the other, I was taken to the garden ; choosing the finest of his dahlias, zinnias, chrysanthemums, and roses, my host with great care arranged a bouquet, which he offered with charming grace. When I thanked him for his kind reception, he made answer, " If any country people of my own found themselves alone in England, I feel sure you would welcome them in the same way, and that it would afford them the same pleasure."

This little speech, so gracefully worded, was said with real feeling. No courtier could have expressed himself better.

I add that both farmers seemed interested in my visit, and both had heard a good deal of England and English ways from friends freed by business to cross that terrible Manche. Insular tourists are apt to sneer at the commercial traveller in France. Perhaps there is no more active agent in promoting international sympathies.

- If we wish to hear cordial opinions of ourselves and our country from French lips, we must go to that large and influential class comprised under the head of business men, who know something of both.

The phenomenal hailstorm I have mentioned



ruined the vintage of 1892 here, but the phylloxera, years before, had greatly impaired agricultural prosperity throughout the department. Thus vineyards formerly worth 12,000 francs per hectare have gone down in value to 3000 francs, or even less; many peasant wine-growers were completely ruined: men who formerly dowered their daughters and sent their sons to study law at the *École de Droit* of Grenoble, who could have withstood a series of bad seasons, anything but the wholesale devastation of their vines. Here, as elsewhere, the enemy is combated with unsparing energy, but, as we have said, it takes five years to create a vineyard, meantime the process is costly, and the owner must live. Some time must elapse before the former condition of prosperity is restored.

There is one harvest throughout Dauphiné which never fails, that of the wild-flowers. Simple gathering is a very profitable occupation on the mountain sides and pastures, more especially in the neighbourhood of L'Oisans. The tourist at Grenoble should not forget to bring away with him some of these excellent field remedies, especially the *fleurs pectorales*, mallow paste, and mulberry syrup. The first consists of dried flowers, of which an infusion is especially beneficial in cases of bronchitis. I can here speak from experience also of the efficacy of the

compound of mallows and of mulberry syrup as a remedy for sore throats. The exceptional qualities of the liqueur of the Grande Chartreuse are due to two causes: firstly, to the perfumes imparted by wild flowers, but chiefly to the super-excellence of the brandy used; only choice old brandy ever enters into the composition of this liqueur, and, as we all know, good brandy of venerable age is in itself an admirable liqueur.

The best gloved nation of Europe will not be behind-hand in the manufacture of gloves; but the well-known house of Jouvin has been too often described to need notice here.

Paper comes next as an important manufacture of this department. In minerals it is especially rich; even gold and silver are found here, with veins of copper, iron ore, lead, cobalt, nickel, antimony, zinc, besides a variety of beautiful marbles. A visit to the museum of natural history will save us much poring over books. The provincial museum in France is ever a series of object lessons for grown-up inquirers. We have here departmental history before our eyes: fauna, flora, mineralogy, petrology, no important feature is left out.

The railway from Grenoble to Gap, *chef-lieu* of the Hautes Alpes, is an amazing piece of engineering, admirably described in Murray's *Handbook*.

At intervals the train crawls like a snail, thus affording ample opportunity for observation. The distance from Grenoble to Gap is under a hundred miles, and the entire journey occupies from five to six hours, the last stage of sixteen miles between Veynes and Gap alone occupying an hour and a half. These figures will give some idea of the engineering difficulties surmounted. The line of railway has been constructed within the last twenty-five years, and consists of bridges, viaducts, and embankments, the whole making up a quite indescribable triumph of skill. So splendid is the mechanism, and so absorbed do we become in the tremendous achievement before us, that we have hardly thoughts for the awful beauty around, scenes not dwarfed or in the least degree commonised by the intrusion of the railway. Here art in its sublimity approaches nature. There is one stage of the journey that ever remains in my memory. Having wound slowly and circuitously upward, the train scaling the mountain-sides corkscrew fashion to the height of 400 feet, we move backwards, once more coming in sight of a little town passed some time before. Another and yet another elevation is reached by means of tunnel and viaduct, and again we see that little town, now dwindled to the dimensions of a pebble, in the vast, mountain-girt hollow below, the railway, here seen at three

elevations, lying like a rope in triple coil behind us. No spectacle is this for the giddy, but one of unsurpassable grandeur for all who have strong heads.

During the long winter these rock-hemmed, snow-bound villages must be dreary in the extreme, but the railway putting them in communication with the outer world will gradually promote material wellbeing. The two departments of the Hautes and Basses Alpes are the poorest and least populated of all France. Absence of sanitation, foul drinking water, poor food, and other causes have hitherto reduced the average of human life in the first-mentioned department to the lowest throughout the country.

As we slowly pass through these picturesque scenes, an unaccustomed sight meets our eyes. It is that of a woman with the badge on her arm of P.L.M.,<sup>1</sup> betokening her office as station-mistress. I have also seen station-mistresses in the Gard, but at present the number of women filling such posts is small.

Gap may best be described as a town with a future, there being little to say of it at present. The site is very picturesque; its mountains, which may almost be called suburban, so near they lie to the town, never lose their snows; winter here is arctic, one prolonged season of frost and snow,

<sup>1</sup> Paris-Lyons-Méditerranée Railway.

with often cloudless skies and dazzling sunshine. There is nothing to see in the town, and a few years ago—the custom may prevail still—butchers slaughtered their sheep in the public ways. Household drainage is, of course, far from satisfactory. So little life and movement animate the place that people always walk in the middle of the streets, no fear of encountering a stray vehicle! The environs are charming in summer time.

There are two cheerful prospects for Gap, the first arising from the new lines of railway about to open direct communication with the sea-coast, and the rich marble quarries and veins of mineral in the neighbourhood. Only easy means of transport are needed to turn these natural resources into money. In *Le Médecin de Campagne* occurs this sentence: "Our country-folks," said the doctor, "do not wear mourning." Half a century ago the peasants of this part of France, either from poverty or economy, refrained from purchasing a bit of black when losing their relatives.

Between Gap and the Italian frontier the snows occasionally lie so deep that, even in the present day, the village folks cannot bury their dead. They are obliged to await the spring, meantime the coffin being interred in field or garden. Doubtless from this fact arose that indifference to outward mourning which Balzac mentions in his great novel.

Within the last twenty years the Franco-Italian frontier from Briançon to Nice has been made to bristle with forts. These works, erected at a cost of many millions, were absolutely necessary, and entailed much individual as well as national sacrifice. The military engineers to whom the forts were entrusted would most probably have as readily undertaken a campaign in Tonquin! Exposure to Siberian weather, wretched accommodation, long journeys and rough ways, to say nothing of danger to life and limb, all these things had to be endured, Gap offering little by way of compensation during intervals of repose. But the French army, in the words of Gambetta, is patriotism itself. Health and comfort are freely and ungrudgingly sacrificed alike in times of peace and war.

It would seem at first sight that no writer could find anything new to say about so well-known a city as Lyons; nor, indeed, has it been my intention in these volumes to describe in detail any French town.

Glancing, however, at the various descriptions of the second city of France in English works of reference, I have been struck by their inadequateness. In fact, the leading characteristic is left out altogether. We learn what most of us knew before, that Lyons is the foremost seat of the silk manufacture in Europe, and a variety of

statistics, the whole preparing us for a second Manchester or Birmingham. In reality, we quit Lyons, as we entered it, without being once reminded of the tens of thousands of silk-loom busily plied from end to end, and of the milliard of francs they represent. Contemplations of quite another kind occupy our thoughts. We find ourselves in a smaller but equally sumptuous Paris, a city that seems built for pleasure and enchantment only.

Perhaps the splendour of Lyons had never struck me so much as on returning from poor, little, uncared-for Gap: but under all circumstances the approach from the railway station comes as a surprise. Buildings, public gardens, monuments are all on so magnificent a scale that at first the unequalled position of the port is lost sight of. There is so much to see here before we can climb the height of Fourvière and gaze on the confluence of the Saône and the Rhône.

The most curious feature in the history of Lyons is its recent transformation. Fifty years ago the *chef-lieu* of the Rhône was still a dull, ill-built, unornamental, pre-eminently commercial and commonplace city. Quite suddenly its inhabitants woke up to the fact. A spirit of emulation stirred all classes; without any stimulus from without, unaided by extraneous enterprise or genius, architects and sculptors set to work,

and straightway a new and beautiful Lyons arose from the ashes of the old. To-day the proud capital of the Lyonnais is one of the most artistic cities of Europe, and owing to its children. The boast of these citizens may be that their town is beholden for adornment to no outsiders. In Michelet's introductory chapter he ingeniously localises characteristics and aptitudes, assigning to each province its special intellectual gifts. To what fortuitous combination of circumstances do we owe the galaxy of native talent whose achievements dazzle here?

Every passing traveller obtains a glimpse of the fine street architecture, boulevards, squares, quays, and public gardens. Few have any idea of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of modern French sculpture massed together at Lyons.

The first thing I do on arriving is to revisit the famous clock of the Bourse, masterpiece of Bonnassieux, a son of Lyons.

This clock, or rather the marble façade adorning it, is not only a work of art but a sermon in stone, perpetually preached to the surging, buzzing crowd below. It stands high above the central hall of the Exchange, at business hours a scene of extraordinary bustle and excitement, which the public can always watch from the gallery above, and at the same time obtain an excellent view of the clock.



The noble piece of sculpture forming the façade represents the various stages of human life, three female figures composing the group: the hour that is gone, the hour that is here, the hour that is coming. Simple as is the arrangement of the whole, nevertheless so skilful is the portrayal that each figure seems to move as we gaze. We almost see the despairing past sink into the abyss, her passive erect sister, the dominant hour, letting go her hand, whilst, radiant and impatient for her own reign to begin, the joyous impersonation of the future springs upward as if on wings.

Such an allegory, so powerfully and poetically rendered in marble, might have been more appropriately placed. Does it not savour of irony thus to idealise the three stages of human existence among the money-changers of the Temple?

The chapel of the noble Hospital farther on contains two works of another local artist, and in quite a different field. In his *Mater Dolorosa* M. Fabisch has not shrunk from comparison with the old masters of Italy. It is a pathetic and beautiful work. As a French critic has said, a glance at that anguish-stricken face pierces like the seven swords in the *Stabat*.

Altogether original, and to my thinking more beautiful, is the Martha and Mary close by. One of the most charming and moving episodes

of the New Testament is here realised with exquisite grace and simplicity. Martha, all womanly welcome and affectionateness, advances smilingly towards the Lord ; Mary seated, awaits Him, lost in pious wonder and contemplation.

A mere enumeration of the modern works of art which now adorn Lyons, the work of Lyonnais, would fill many pages. It is the sum total, the achievements in architecture, sculpture, and painting that is so remarkable. History, artistically speaking, repeats itself. The cradle of Coysevox, the Coustous, Lemot, Philippe Delorme, and other great sculptors and architects, Lyons has in our own day witnessed an extraordinary and admirable Renaissance. Alike in stone, marble, and bronze, its children have raised themselves durable monuments. Nor in minor fields has the beautiful been neglected, witness the elegantly-laid-out public squares and gardens which for some reason or other have a charm and grace never seen out of France.

The art and science collections and public library are on a scale of sumptuosity we should expect. Most interesting to English visitors is the Palais de Commerce, on the plan of South Kensington, where the great industry of Lyons may be studied in all its phases.

The retribution that sooner or later awaits religious and political persecution is here illustrated.

It was by Italian political refugees that silk-weaving was introduced into this city under the reign of Louis XI., the far-sighted king freeing the immigrants from all taxation, and in every way encouraging the enterprise.

By the middle of the sixteenth century the number of silk-weavers had risen to 12,000. Bigotry, however, is blind, and a century later, in the name of a most Christian king, the splendid industry of Lyons was all but destroyed. Two-thirds of the silk-weavers were expelled, on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, to the great advantage of our own country.

Lyons has done well to preserve, under the name of "Musée de la Propagation de la Fir," a collection of instruments of torture,—relics of that era of persecution. We cannot be too often reminded, even in our own day, of what the mediæval "saving of souls" really meant.

In spite of cheap competition, silk-worm disease, and other causes, the silk industry of Lyons represents a total milliard francs yearly; whilst in design and texture it still holds the first place. This high standard has never been deviated from, and of course the price is in proportion. A piece of Lyons silk or velvet is in reality a work of art.<sup>1</sup>

I will now explain how it is that the industrial

<sup>1</sup> E. Réclus.

aspect of the place escapes observation. For the most part, instead of being massed together in factories, artisans work at home. The custom, as we should expect, has no little influence on temperament and character. A French writer who knows his countrymen well thus describes the silk weavers of Lyons: "Thanks to the conditions under which they work, the Lyonnais are distinguished by special characteristics. They are more reserved, more contemplative, more serious than their fellows; the solitary hours of work often engender mysticism and exaltation of mind."<sup>1</sup> Nowhere else has the socialist movement made more rapid progress. It is on Sunday that the workman is seen at his best. Drive to the favourite holiday ground of the Île Barbe, and you will see him picnicing with wife and children, the pet dog making one of the company. For slender purses there are cheap boats, the railway and the omnibus, and on summer days we find scores of family parties bivouacing under the trees. Cold patties, fruit, wine, and enormous loaves of bread are relished as refreshment is only relished out of doors; the meal over, old and young amuse themselves by fishing for minnows in the clear water. How merry are all; how much too swiftly fleet the bright hours!

\* Nor should any one quit Lyons without visiting

<sup>1</sup> Note 5. Lyons silk.

*La Guillotière.* It is difficult to believe that we are in a hotbed of revolutionary socialism. On a Sunday afternoon, anarchist and red republican in holiday dress sun themselves over a newspaper, their babies and household pets sporting near. Grandames gossip, young folks flirt,—the stormiest quarter of the stormiest city of France is placid as the Saône.

Lyons, a fortified place of the first rank, has been immensely strengthened since the war. Seven forts on the modern plan have been added within the last twenty years. Both right and left banks of the Saône are now protected by works, under separate military command.

The department of the Rhône, with Lyons for its *chef-lieu*, was formed from the ancient province of Lyonnais and Forez, incorporated into the French kingdom in 1312. Folks still constantly speak of such and such a place being in the Forez,—a designation puzzling to the stranger, no such name appearing on the map.

## PART III

PROVINCE: NORMANDY



## I

DEPARTMENTS: SEINE INFÉRIEURE, MANCHE

MY present journey begins at Amiens, and will take the reader through portions of Normandy and Brittany, more especially interesting from an agricultural or industrial point of view. Of the picturesqueness and archæological splendour of these ancient provinces hardly a word remains to be said. My business is not with these. What I have to say concerning Normandy will be prosaic, and in revisiting Brittany I shall chiefly examine the changes that have taken place in that once fossilized country since 1875, *i.e.* the date of my year's sojourn at Nantes.

I take it for granted that most English readers are familiar, if not with Amiens itself, at least with one of its art treasures, popularised—in the elevated sense of the word—by our great Ruskin. But the “Bible at Amiens” is not the only magnetic attraction. The Museum and Picture Gallery would exact a chapter, were we writing of any



other country but France; and here the most fastidious may take his ease at his inn. Unfortunately, this busy, flourishing, manufacturing town is unblessed in the matter of climate. Rain is said to fall there in the maximum proportion, and the enormous number of factory chimneys render the atmosphere turgid.

"I have just come back from Rouen," wrote the late Earl of Lytton to me in 1890, "which I had never seen before, and which I think one of the most picturesque and interesting towns I ever saw. Its population (apparently a very prosperous one) seems to be as successfully occupied now in making cottons as it was formerly in making churches, *autres temps, autres mœurs!*" What would Lord Lytton have thought of the Rouen of twenty-five years ago? I regret now that I did not journalise my experiences of the first French town I visited in my youth. There were at that time old-fashioned hotels with large gardens in the heart of the city, and very little of modernisation had taken place. We were in a mediæval town still, its grand old churches, municipal buildings, and gateways constituting the Rouen I remember. A quarter of an hour sufficed to transport you into the country, from the quiet streets to the quieter roads winding amid apple orchards. It takes a long time nowadays to clear the suburbs,—wide new boulevards

leading to charming villas and cottages for miles inland. From the green heights dominating the city eastward we may form some idea of its extent, both as a seat of manufacture and a port. "They are right to have country villas, to get out of this great, ugly, stinking, close, and ill-built town," wrote Arthur Young in 1788. He adds, "What a picture of new buildings does a flourishing manufacturing town in England exhibit!" The same may be said of the French Manchester at the present time. Manchester and Liverpool in one, we should call the newly-built capital of the Seine Inférieure. Its enormously-increased importance as a centre of cotton manufacture is chiefly due to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Prussia in 1871. The Rouen fabric may be compared to our own cheap Manchester goods; coarser and stronger far than the celebrated cottons of Alsace, large quantities are exported to Algeria, where they are used as clothing by the natives. Rouen now furnishes one-third of the cottons manufactured throughout France. Our Consul in his last report shows how this increased activity has affected the town as a port.<sup>1</sup> Between 1869 and 1871 the average tonnage entering the port yearly was 573,746; between 1889 and 1891 the average was 2,000,543, so that in twenty years the shipping has quadrupled.

<sup>1</sup> Consular Report, 1892. See Note 6.

The average size of the vessels frequenting the port has increased threefold. In former days cargo intended for Rouen was usually discharged into smaller vessels at Havre, but now ocean-going steamers start directly for Australia and America, returning to Rouen. The area of the harbour has been largely increased, and other works constructed at a cost of two million sterling.

Nor has municipal lavishness been confined to material objects. The magnificent museum, finished in 1888, and its collections of pictures, pottery, sculpture, and antiquities show what intellectual provision is deemed necessary in France for a town of a hundred and odd thousand souls. I need not, however, enlarge upon that subject. More necessary, perhaps, is a hint about French provincial theatres, which knowledge-seeking tourists should never fail to visit. There are several here, and even a hundred years ago, the "dirty, ugly, stinking, close, and ill-built town" Arthur Young speaks of, possessed a creditable opera house. The wise and honest traveller here in 1788 heard Grétry's *Caravanne du Caire*. "The more I see of the French theatre, the more, I am forced to acknowledge its superiority to our own," he wrote, "in the number of good performers and in the paucity of bad ones."

There are natural drawbacks to extraordinary commercial development, and Rouen is said to

be the most intemperate of all French towns, Caen following next in the black list. Here, indeed, may be occasionally seen that terrible spectacle, a drunken woman, so rare on French soil. An instructive map, appended to M. de Foville's *France Économique*, shows us that the proportion of cabarets to each inhabitant increases as we proceed from south to north. Notwithstanding his figures, and here, I feel sure all travellers will agree with me, drunkenness very rarely meets our eyes in France.

It is usual in England to associate sordidness and peasant property, the exaggerated frugality and laboriousness of French rural life with minute subdivision of land. A so-called realistic writer has done all that lies in his power to strengthen this prejudice, and to invest his rustic neighbours with the most revolting qualities that disgrace humanity. How far M. Zola's pictures deviate from the truth, all those familiar with provincial France can testify. The fact cannot be too strongly emphasised that in a region as exempt from peasant property as England itself, a region of which no square yard belongs to the cultivator of the soil, the observer for the first time acknowledges Zolaism! Strange as it must sound in English ears, such an anomaly exists. By far the larger portion of an entire department is let on lease to tenant farmers and cultivated by

day labourers precisely on the footing of our own, with what results I shall now set forth. The experience is, perhaps, the most startling of all afforded by my French journeys.

The first stage of our way between Rouen and St. Romain de Colbosc is unpicturesque but instructive. We here realise that combination of rural and industrial activity on which French prosperity so largely depends. Arthur Young, traversing this region a hundred years ago, hit off its features in a sentence. "Farmhouses and cottages everywhere;" he wrote in 1788, "and the cotton manufacture in all." For some miles the country is very flat, tall factory chimneys rising at intervals above the beautifully cultivated plain. The wheat harvest—I am writing of 18th August 1892—was already over, and in many places the land already ploughed up. About midway the scenery improves from the artist's point of view, gentle undulations alternate with rich woods, apple orchards with chequered sweeps, the varied crops dazzlingly bright under the hot summer sky. Here and there we see little flocks of sheep tended on a patch of clover hardly larger than a carpet. The apple orchards increase in size and number as we proceed, young trees being planted in rows after the manner of vines.

We are soon in the Pays de Caux as the uniform landscape tells us. This vast plateau makes up the larger portion of the Seine Inférieure, and is quite unlike any other portion of France. Instead of scattered towns and villages, with tall factory chimneys towering above the foliage, we enter a uniform tableland, thickly dotted with what look like little plantations between each, level sweeps of unhedged pasture and corn-land. These groves or bosquets indicate small tenant farms, trees being planted to screen homesteads and apple orchards from the searching winds. Nothing can be more monotonous or unpicturesque. Another absolutely new feature to me was the appearance of gleaners. The cleared cornfields were alive with women and children, the first thus occupied I had ever seen in France, a fact afterwards explained to me.

St. Romain de Colbosc is a town of less than two thousand inhabitants, with handsome public buildings. It enjoys the distinction of possessing a Liberal curé, the only one, I should say, of Western France.

\* Just before my arrival the annual distribution of prizes to the municipal schools had taken place; the *Juge de Paix* who presided in absence of the mayor, took occasion to point out the enormous changes effected by the Third Republic in the matter of primary instruction. He cited these

figures: under Louis Philippe the budget of national education was under 18 million francs; twenty-five years later 25 millions was the amount; at the present time the sum total is 168 millions. Here was an argument even his youthful hearers could understand.

In company of residents I visited a typical farm of the Pays de Caux. One in every detail resembles another—crops, methods, condition of farmer, show hardly any divergence. The land is let on lease or in small parcels. Fifty hectares is considered a very large holding, by far the larger proportion number a few hectares only. When we proceed to examine things with our own eyes, the rigid uniformity found everywhere becomes positively distracting. Down to the minutest particular routine is the order of the day. We seem suddenly transported into a region peopled by automata. Such uncompromising conservatism is partly accounted for by soil and climate. Existence is so easy, old-fashioned farming so profitable, that motive is wanting for initiative. That habits and customs should remain stationary is more astonishing. Railways now intersect the department; its *chef-lieu* takes the ninth rank of French towns, its great port the second; St. Romain lies within two hours and a half of Rouen, is even nearer Havre, yet prosperous farmers follow their calling

as their grandfathers did before them, live on the same plan, are satisfied with the same results.

To my thinking the Pays de Caux is very depressing. Each homestead stands amid lines of beech and oak, formal as toy trees of a child's mimic garden. The trees, regularly planted and cut at intervals, form a parallelogram, affording shelter to farmhouse buildings and apple orchards. You enter this sombre enclosure to light upon an unwonted and heart-rending spectacle. In the open space between house and trees is a pen, perhaps two yards square, life-long prison of the trusty watch-dog. Incredible as it may appear, no one sees any cruelty in keeping a dog thus cooped within iron pailings from January to December; in fact, from its youth to old age, never for a single moment is it allowed to escape. My kind host and cicerone, a resident of St. Romain, agreed with me on the unnaturalness of such treatment. "A dog in the eyes of these good folks," he said, "is a barking machine (*une machine à aboyer*), nothing else." The custom of penning dogs in order to render them more ferocious has been handed down from father to son, and is, I believe, confined to the Pays de Caux. As I shall have occasion to point out later on, Normandy and Brittany offer a succession of shocks to the humane, to say nothing of lovers of animals. In the Seine Inférieure and



the Manche I witnessed more brutality to dumb creatures than throughout all the departments elsewhere described put together.

In the absence of the master a young farm labourer, boarded in the house, showed us over the premises and farm. The family dwelling and buildings were spacious and well kept, an enormous grange being devoted to cider vats and cider making. We were courteously invited to taste the popular drink; but although wholesome enough, it is flat and insipid to the novice. Cider,<sup>1</sup> as made in Normandy, is the pure juice of the apple; no sugar or any adjunct enters into its composition. The apples, which are uneatable, remain on the trees till December; there are three kinds, the bitter, the bitter-sweet, and the sweet. These varieties are usually mixed; small cider, answering to our small beer or the small wine in France, called piquette, is a mixture of apple juice and rain or river water, spring water not containing enough oxygen. The apples, after being bruised, remain in a pulpy state in free contact with the air from twelve to twenty-four hours. Fermentation takes place very slowly, and at a temperature of from 58 to 64 degrees Fahr. The casks are cleaned by throwing in wadding set on flame by alcohol, the most absolute cleanliness being requisite. When cider

<sup>1</sup> See Note 7.

“works” from not having been properly fermented, a second fermentation is obtained by means of sugar. Throughout Normandy cider is the drink of all classes. In each of the departments of Orne and Manche in 1881 considerably over two million imperial pints were fabricated.

We next made a round of the farm, in every detail characterised by mathematical uniformness. Here Wordsworth’s cows, “forty feeding like one,” are like the unhappy dogs, victims of routine. No grass grows on these tablelands; all forage, therefore, is artificial. The cows are tethered in rows on the small clover-fields, their tether being changed five times a day. From early spring until late autumn, they remain afield night and day, never able to seek the shelter of neighbouring trees, or, what is a greater hardship, running water. The dearth of water is the drawback to farming here. There are no springs, and when the rain supply falls short, the only resource is the river several miles away. This was the case during our visit, and it was pathetic to hear the lowing of the thirsty animals, and see the longing eyes turned towards the water-cart. Only two pails a day each are given in dry seasons, much less, of course, than is really needed.

The crops are colza, wheat, rye, and clover, the latter planted on cleared corn-lands for immediate use. Rye is chiefly grown on account of

the straw, which is used for tying up wheat sheaves. Apples form an important crop; but the most profitable of all is colza, harvested in April. Neither butter nor cheese are made in the immediate neighbourhood of St. Romain, the milk being sent to Havre.

Let me here add a few figures obligingly set down for this work by the French friend who accompanied me. The farm just described consists of 33 hectares and 60 ares, a little over 80 acres; its value in money is about a hundred thousand francs, the yearly rent paid by farmer is five thousand francs. A three-course system is followed, a third of the land being planted with wheat, a third with oats, clover being sown after harvest, a third with clover, colza, potatoes, beetroot, carrots, cape. No natural pasture exists on the farm. The stock consists of forty head of cattle, viz., milch cows and calves, and five horses kept for tillage. The wages of farm-servants, who are boarded and lodged, are as follows: from 280 to 400 francs, women servants receiving 240 francs.

One farm, I am assured, may be accepted as typical of all. No modernisation has as yet crept in, artificial manure is not resorted to, nor are new agricultural implements tried. The fact is, these small tenant farmers are too well off. They possess invested capital; many could

retire to-morrow if they chose, the result being a universal stagnation. Model farms, schools of agriculture, and other incitements to enterprise are wanting; the soil is so fertile and free from stones that profitable farming is a very easy matter; last, but not least, this lethargic habit of mind exists in far greater degree among the poor. For the first time I may apply these words as used in England to a rural population here. "The poor" of the Pays de Caux are those who cultivate the soil without any share of its products, and if they have sunk lower in the scale of humanity than their English brethren, the cause is not far to seek. As the late eminent economist M. Baudrillart pointed out, the Norman peasant is not allowed to read the Bible, and nothing has taken its place. Alike in matters social and spiritual, he has fared much worse than the Kentish ploughman. No Labourer's Union has raised his position, no enlightened philanthropy has as yet come to his aid. Possessing neither house, garden, nor poultry, badly off for furniture and clothes, addicted to drunkenness and debt, during the winter months dependent on bread tickets and stone-breaking paid by the commune, here, indeed, is a portrait Zola might have painted, but it is not the portrait of a peasant owner. Whatever causes may have led to his degradation, it is not the possession of land.

I alluded farther back to the sight of gleaners. Women here do not care to work out of doors, but they are always ready to glean. It was the first time in France that I had ever seen the picturesque but melancholy spectacle familiar to English eyes, crowds of women and children thankful to pick up a few scattered ears.

Intemperance is the curse of this immediate region. The terrible prevalence of drunkenness is attributed to the following fact :—Some years ago an extraordinary abundance of apples led to the manufacture of cider brandy. The taste for strong drink once acquired, intemperate habits increased, leading, of course, to debt, want, and immorality.

The land hereabouts chiefly belongs to large non-resident landowners, and again we are reminded of English rural life. The reactionary spirit is still in full force, a good deal of influence, and occasionally considerable pressure, being exercised by the squirearchy. The communal schools for both sexes at St. Romain, as I have already mentioned, are emancipated from clerical thraldom. •

It is hardly likely that among those who regard the dog as a mere machine, animals destined for the butcher or the market should receive anything approaching to humane treatment. During my stay at St. Romain the heat was

abnormal, even for a French August. The town lies only two miles from the railway station, diligences plying every hour; yet closely-packed baskets of ducks and chickens were allowed to wait in the broiling sun hours before departure. It never seemed to occur to any one that slow death by suffocation is cruelty. Of course nothing could be easier than to despatch these hampers of live poultry at night and expeditiously, to say nothing of less brutal packing. That any arrived at their destination alive I do not for a moment believe.

The treatment of stock is more abominable still. As we journeyed back to Rouen, our route *via* Havre being given up on account of the cholera, it was pitiable to see the densely-packed cattle-trucks shunted at the various stations. The unhappy animals, fastened by the horns to iron pegs outside, were thus kept in the same position for hours, unable to move the fraction of an inch. No wonder that the *Daily News* correspondent about this time gave particulars of 300 head of cattle and 100 pigs found dead from suffocation on arriving in Paris.<sup>1</sup> On 21st August 1892, at 2.30 P.M., the thermometer outside my window at Rouen registered 52 degrees Centigrade (125 degrees Fahr.)

<sup>1</sup> See Note 8.

## II

### DEPARTMENTS: CALVADOS, MANCHE

I HAD originally intended to enter the Manche by way of Havre and Honfleur. The appearance of the cholera at the former place made it more prudent to return to Rouen, and thence reach St. Lô by railway.

The journey on a day of torrid heat is anything but agreeable ; no shelter is afforded at the junctions of Serquigny and Lison ; no porters are to be had for the transport of hand baggage, and little in the way of civility from officials. I therefore advise future travellers to snap their fingers at cholera, and take the Havre boat across the estuary.

By way of compensation the country is beautiful and varied, with quite different cultivation from that of the Pays de Caux. Between the two towns of unpleasant memory just named, the gardens of intervening railway stations are beautifully kept, I presume, as on some other lines at the expense of the company.

That the climate of France, like our own, is subject to caprice, none can deny. Two years before, I had written from Falaise on the 30th August: "I shall begin to fancy myself in Scotland or Wales. The weather is wet and chilly, a fire would be agreeable; summer clothes are useless." And about the same date in 1892 we had quite tropic heat. Caen is separated from Rouen by a few hours' journey only. Yet how many ages, artistically speaking, divide the two capitals! It is as if Florence and Athens were suddenly brought into juxtaposition, alike feeling and execution are in utter contrast.

At Rouen the eye is bewildered with lavish decoration. Doric simplicity is outvied in the church destined as his mausoleum by the Conqueror. The Abbaye aux Hommes gives us the impression of Greek sculpture—all is cold, stately, austere.

Caen may be described as a city of churches. All day long is heard the boom of bells and the striking of clocks. The place seems to hold perpetual *fête* of solemn kind. It is a bright, cheerful, altogether modernised town, with beautiful public gardens and park. The tourist seeks vainly for a portrait of Charlotte Corday. The good townsfolk have apparently lost all enthusiasm for their heroine, the manufacture of hosiery engrossing the public energies.



Between Caen and Falaise the country is flat, and recalls England, with large, well-cultivated hedged-in fields and farmhouses set in gardens and apple orchards. From amid these level horizons and homely pictures, fit emblem of a career that made an epoch in the world's history, rises the bold headland of Falaise, birth-place of William the Norman. "There was never a moment from his boyhood," writes our own historian, "when he was not the greatest of men." Yonder sombre escarpment, still crowned by the stronghold in which he first saw the light, stands as stood the hero alone, no height to bear it company. The town itself is a most picturesque and taking little place, with terraced gardens, the gray walls and greenery in beautiful contrast, and far and wide, wooded slopes dotted with villas and country houses. From the windows of the old-fashioned inn is a wide and charming prospect, line above line of granite, ivy-covered wall ; deep down on different ledges, little cottages, each having vinery and garden ; beyond these, park-like gardens of château and villas ; far away verdant country and rich foliage of lime, elm, and poplar.

The townsfolk have erected a fine equestrian statue to their hero, and the château and precincts are reverently and beautifully kept. It makes us blush when we think of the lift for which the

Town Council of Hastings lately ruined the spot where the history of England may be said to begin.

Arthur Young passed by Falaise, although he visited the famous fair of Guibray, which may be called its suburb. More astonishing is the fact that only a tenth part of the annual visitors now are English. During the summer months fifty persons a day on an average visit the château. A fine view is obtained from the road below. A feature of the clean healthy suburbs are the rustic balconies outside every window dazzlingly brilliant with flowers. The poorest have their wooden shelf filled with begonias, geraniums, and carnations. From end to end the place is clean and cheerful, and during my stay of several days I failed to discover a single beggar or ragged dirty person. Sanitation is still ignored, and beyond extreme civility, low charges, good rooms, and good food, expectation must never soar.

Before quitting the department of the Calvados, a word as to its name. When the members of the National Assembly set to work upon the administrative unification of the country, they adopted a simple and logical nomenclature. Each department was named after its most striking physical feature. Originally and appropriately called the Orne Inférieure, the department in question afterwards received the name of the

Calvados, a word which has nothing whatever to do either with French history or geography. In old English maps, a rock off the coast of Normandy had been thus designated after the *Salvador*, a Spanish galleon wrecked on that spot during the dispersion of the Armada. Why such a change was made we are not told.

We obtain splendid views of Coutances and Bayeux, also much fine fresh scenery between Rouen and St. Lô, *chef-lieu* of the Manche, formerly called the isthmus of the Cotentin. St. Lô is a fairly clean, airy, cheerful town of 10,000 and odd souls, possessing handsome public buildings, library, museum, gymnasium, State-aided Haras or stud, fine old church, and several beautiful old houses. Beggars there are none, beggary being forbidden throughout the arrondissement. The chief ornament of the town is an ornamental fountain, of which a resident recounted an amusing story. The decoration of this fountain was entrusted to a native artist, who very naturally wished to symbolise the leading characteristic of the locality. With this intention he designed in bronze the figure of a milkwoman, pail in hand, and wearing the traditional coif. An excellent statue it is, and doubtless the sculptor expected no unstinted meed of praise. Unfortunately he had not taken into account the coquetry of the other sex. One and all, the women of St. Lô rose up

in arms; that the typical dairymaid should be represented as old, withered, and ugly, was regarded by them in the light of a downright affront. The statue remains, but in all probability will ere long be replaced by another—that of some bonnie maiden whose face might be her fortune, supposing the possession of no other among young girls in France.

The men are a fine, handsome, burly race, who might have been the Conqueror's barons. Were they only more humane to animals they would win our hearts. During two weeks' stay in the Pays de Caux and the Cotentin<sup>1</sup> I witnessed more brutality towards the dumb world than throughout months of travel and residence elsewhere. If in the former region the dog is regarded simply as a *machine à aboyer*, in the second, animals reared for the butcher are treated with no more consideration than if they were cabbages or potatoes. I am sorry to have to say anything so hard of the worthy Norman farmers, but alas! it is true.

As all English readers know, we are now in 'the great butter-making country of France, but there are dairies and dairies. Nothing can be more strikingly contrasted than the process of

<sup>1</sup> That part of Normandy bound eastward by the Gulf of Carentan, westward by the Bay of Mont. St. Michel, and forming the greater part of the department of the Manche.

churning as carried on here and in Savoy, described lately.

We are still among tenant farmers, and one holding, as in the Pays de Caux, greatly resembles another. Fifty hectares may be accepted as the average, the best land being rented at 300 or 350 francs per hectare, that of inferior quality at 250 or 200 francs. Here, however, exist large numbers of peasant properties and tenancies, some of these being less than half a hectare in extent. A farm of fifty hectares will support forty cows.

On a delightfully fresh morning, the air having a briskness of September, I visited a farm in the neighbourhood of Lison, having for ciccone a friend of the farmer. As we sauntered along a shady lane leading from the station to the farm, our host met us with his little son. He wore a blue blouse over his black cloth suit, and greeted us with the correct French and easy manners of a well-bred gentleman. We then took our places in the old-fashioned square cart and drove on, madame coming forward to meet us as soon as we appeared in sight.

She was a middle-aged, pleasant-faced woman, and, like her husband, had put on Sunday dress in our honour, retaining the neat white coif of the country. I daresay she had never entertained English visitors before, but with

perfect self-possession and urbanity now begged us to enter, invited us to stay and partake of the mid-day meal, then finding that we were pressed for time, offered to show us her dairy.

The neat parlour was such as we should find in an English farmhouse; the buildings were spacious and well kept, and a flower garden brightened one side of the house. Several handsome dogs were running about, evidently friends of the household. The dog at any rate here is considered something more than a barking machine. This neatly-dressed, well-mannered farmer's wife supervised the dairy of forty cows herself, absolute cleanliness being attained in every particular. We no longer wonder at the excellence of Normandy butter when we see the pains bestowed upon it.

The large earthen vessels for holding milk and cream, the churn, the copper milking pails, were all as fleckless as scouring could make them. The churn used was the patented Norwegian kind, of wood bound with steel, and which is so constructed as to separate the cream from the milk in globules. Only cream, pure and unmixed, is used in the making of butter, a very small quantity of salt being added for the English market. The milking is done afield all the year round by women. They set off to the pastures on donkeys, their picturesque brass pails slung

on either side. The winters are comparatively mild here, and the cows remain out of doors all the year round.

The enormous quantities of skimmed milk are used for the fattening of calves and pigs. The calves are separated from the mother at the birth, and are reared for three months, during the whole time being tied up in the cow-house. We next visited the enormous cider presses and vats, the stables and gardens, lastly, the *herbages*, as pastures are called in these regions.

In the Pays de Caux, as I have just mentioned, pastures do not exist, every blade and leaf destined for cattle have to be planted and tended. Here we find an exactly opposite state of things. The celebrated *herbages* of the Cotentin spring up naturally, and afford several crops a year. On this 23rd of August, after a three months' drought, the grass showed a luxuriant crop, and the country was verdant as in April. Where the farm premises ended, the pastures began,—far as the eye could reach, stretch upon stretch of brilliant turf, here and there the beautiful dun-coloured cows grazing at large. On re-entering the house a luncheon of sparkling wine, new milk, bread and butter, awaited us, and whilst partaking we had much interesting conversation.

In his remarkable account of Auvergne, the late Mr. Barham Zincke alluded to the ready speech of

his host: "The peasant in his blouse seemed, almost equally with the priest in his frock, to feel a keen pleasure in thinking and putting thought into correct and lucid French." A similar reflection constantly occurs to the English sojourner in rural France. Whether the reason is to be found in natural capacity or in more careful instruction, I cannot determine,—certain it is that conversational powers are much more common than among ourselves.

The first subject that came up was Protection. Nothing could be more courteous and good-natured than the tone taken by my host and cicerone, the latter, a professor of agriculture; but I could see that, underlying their playfulness, lay really bitter feeling.

"Your country-people," began the first, "are Free Traders in theory, but Protectionists in practice. That is the truth of the matter. Look at their dealings with ourselves. You accept our butter, eggs, and garden produce, but, under pretext of contagious disease, exclude our cattle. No such disease exists at the present time. The opening of English markets to French live stock would prove an immense benefit to the farmers of Normandy; yet, despite protest after protest, they remain shut. You see, therefore, that we have some reason for complaint, and I admit it to you, I am an out-and-out Protectionist."



The other now took up the cudgels, but as I felt incompetent to deal with the subject, they had the argument to themselves. Again and again both reiterated the statement, not the shadow of a pretext existed for the embargo on French cattle, it was simply Protection disguised.

As a set-off to this friendly skirmish, let me narrate what followed. Our host next talked of his boy, and of his intention to send him a little later to England.

"I wish him to learn English and English ways of farming," he said, adding that he should place him without the slightest scruple in any family I might recommend. On my laughingly assuring him that the little lad would return an ardent Free-Trader, he replied good-naturedly, "Then he shall try to convert me."

I mention the fact as illustrative of the friendly feeling that exists towards us, in spite of political and economic differences. Here was an untravelled, unlettered farmer ready to confide his only child to English keeping, what was more astonishing still, a French mother of the same opinion. The truth of the matter is that, setting aside certain sections of society and certain newspapers, nothing is more warmly desired by the French nation than amicable relations with their neighbours over the water.

Our luncheon over, we were driven to the

station, only regretting the enforced curtailment of our visit. These hospitable entertainers, their intelligent conversation, the sweet pastoral country, were all very attractive. Beyond the lofty hedges, covered with luscious blackberries, stretched sweeps of meadow peopled with cattle, the roads were veritable avenues. The weather was perfect; I recall with pleasure that August morning and the farmhouse near Lison.

I set down a few general facts furnished me by an agriculturist resident at St. Lô. In the north of the department the parsnip is largely cultivated for the fattening of cattle and winter food of cows, also the carrot, which is especially advantageous in the production of good butter. The Swede turnip is cultivated in the north and south as well. Isigny and Valogne are large centres of butter-making, the Cotentin breed of cows being second only to those of Jersey as milkers.

The rearing of horses is even more important than the manufacture of butter. The Norman carriage horse is exported to America, indeed, the whole world, and is also preferred before any other for cavalry at home. Most of the private stables of Paris are supplied from Normandy. In company of the same admirable cicerone I visited the State-aided stud, or Haras of St. Lô, quite recently installed in new and much larger

premises. As we have nothing at all answering to these establishments, I will describe what I saw in detail.

The word Haras is derived from the Arabic *faras*, a horse. There are twenty-three of these government Haras in France, that of St. Lô being one of the most important. The stables, exercising ground, and residence of director, form a vast square, its proportions dwarfing that of the town to comparative insignificance. Everything is on a handsome scale. The director receives from the State the pay of a colonel, and the grooms wear a semi-military uniform, their white trousers and scarlet jackets lending a look of animation to the place. The entire initial cost, amounting to several millions of francs, has been borne by the State, horse-rearers enjoying the advantage. Such lavish expenditure, censured in many quarters, is easily justifiable on patriotic grounds. What indeed more important in any country than its breed of horses? We visited some of the stables, which are kept in exquisite order. Here, on an average, are three hundred horses, worth from four thousand francs and upwards, all belonging to private persons. We saw a variety of beautiful animals differing in colour and breed, the name and pedigree of each being attached to the manger. All horse lovers should visit these Haras; here grooming reaches

its acme. The horses are not only exercised on the grounds, but on the vast Champs des Mars or public pleasure ground outside the town.

It may interest some readers to learn the proportion of horses in France at the present time as compared with that of former years. At the beginning of the Revolution, Lavoisier estimated the total number of horses in France at a million and three quarters. In 1888 there were three millions employed in agriculture only. Yet, years before, Balzac<sup>1</sup> had predicted that excessive subdivision of the soil would result in the utter disappearance of horses and cattle throughout the country. This shows that, alike with regard to facts and theories, French novelists are not to be relied on when describing rural life.

Formerly France imported rather than exported horses. For many years past the exports have tripled the imports.<sup>2</sup> It was sad to reflect that these tenderly-reared animals would be thrust on the world, for good or evil fortune, to find careful or cruel masters as the case may be.

I must not forget one romantic export from this department. The exporters of mistletoe little guess perhaps what blushing episodes their wares bring about,—the kissing in rustic houses, the lovers' quarrels thereby induced, the re-kissing to

<sup>1</sup> See *Les Paysans*, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> See De Foville, *La France Économique*.

make them up, the old folks smiling as they look on. More to the purpose of the prosaic Norman farmer is the money represented by this quaint and time-honoured parasite, cuckoo of the vegetable world. Enormous quantities grow in this region, and the exportation to England takes place early in December. In 1889, 578 "harasses," a local term, were exported from Granville alone, each bundle consisting of sixty tufts, twenty francs being paid for a hundred tufts.

From Cherbourg also mistletoe is largely sent to England, in 1890 the weight being nearly fifty thousand kilos.<sup>1</sup>

Alas! kissing under the mistletoe is fated to go the way of many another good old custom. The delicate and fanciful bloom so piously cut by Druidess with golden sickle is doomed. Not the phylloxera itself is now deemed more deserving of extermination. The prefect's edict has gone forth, and farmers, instead of packing bundles of mistletoe for English homes, are bidden to eradicate a pernicious plant from their apple trees. Thus, all the world over, beauty is sacrificed to utility, and the American vulgarity deplored by Renan is becoming the order of the day.

Some prosaic scientist discovered that the parasite absorbs the sap of the apple tree, affords

<sup>1</sup> The kilo is 2 lbs. 3.26 oz.

a hiding-place for insects, and in fact undermines the health of its adopted parent. Cider-makers have taken alarm, and leasers of farms are bidden to insert the following clause in their agreements : "That the tenant be under the obligation to destroy every year the mistletoe on his apple trees, or the same will be done at his expense." And as if not a vestige of poetry were allowed breathing room, the farmer is reminded that, destructive as is the mistletoe in his apple trees, it affords admirable food for his pigs ! Again remove the berries, and you have a valuable forage in winter time ; cows and sheep take to it kindly. Not only is the apple tree to be cleared of its fairy-like visitant, but every other it favours, the tulip tree, the holly, the aspen, the ash, the elm, the birch, and others. In fact, extermination is aimed at, and English arboriculturists will do well to take the hint.

I here take occasion to mention that where I do not quote authorities in agricultural matters, my sources of information have been the reports or written statistics of the State-paid departmental professors of agriculture. The present French government, staunch to Sully's maxim, "*le labourage, le pâturage sont les deux mamelles de la France*," has made tremendous efforts on behalf of agricultural progress throughout the country. Since the Franco-Prussian war, professorships of

agriculture were appointed, the holders being recruited from the great agricultural schools of Graud-Jouan, Grignan, etc. Their duties are manifold; during the winter they lecture on the theory and practice of farming in the training colleges for male teachers, during the summer they give lectures, chiefly out of doors, in the various towns and villages round about. The lecturer gets the peasants together on a Sunday afternoon, and in easy, colloquial fashion discourses upon new methods, improved machinery, and rural topics generally. The conference over, he displays specimens of artificial manure, seeds, and roots, here and there inducing the more enterprising to try experiments. From time to time he draws up reports on agricultural progress, issues pamphlets and flying sheets upon any important matter that comes to the fore, whilst his knowledge and experience are at everybody's service. Apiculture, the vintage, silk-worm rearing, liqueur-making—all these subjects come within his province, each professor of course chiefly devoting himself to the special products of his own department. It seems to me that one step more requires to be taken,—the utility of these State-paid agriculturists would be immensely increased by more varied knowledge. They should visit our own shores, and acquaint themselves with English high farming. If our cultivators have much to learn on the other side

of the channel, the same may be said of their French neighbours.

Agricultural shows, on which I shall have more to say hereafter, also greatly further rural progress. Nothing delights the farmer more than to garland his barn or stable door with the little blue tablets representing his prizes gained at these shows. A prize cow or horse is exhibited with infinite satisfaction.

The Cotentin is said to present the old Norman type in its purity, lofty stature, clear complexion, and blue eyes. The race is certainly a fine one, but the characteristics just mentioned struck me much more forcibly at Falaise. Affability to strangers is a general trait, and one to which I owe perhaps as much information as to statistics and reports. At St. Lô, for instance, my travelling companion began to sketch the picturesque outside pulpit of the Cathedral. Immediately a gunsmith, whose shop was close by, brought out a chair for the sketcher, and invited me inside. For half an hour we chatted, rather, I should say, my host entertained me with intelligent talk upon many subjects. He had witnessed the siege of Paris, but being employed in the State arsenal, fared better than most. That charming spontaneous cheerfulness of the French temperament was here joined to a truly philosophic mind. "I am neither rich nor poor," he said, "but I get



an honest living. Why should not any man be satisfied with that and the esteem of his neighbours?" Why not, indeed?

Probably this good armourer had never read Darwin or Herbert Spencer, but he had arrived at the same conclusions. In politics he was an ardent Republican. Talk with whom you will in France, you never find a man who has not emancipated himself from dogma. Dogma is left to the women and the clergy. "Ah, yes, the clergy, one and all, are dead against democratic institutions," he went on, "but it is not the bishops, in spite of their electoral catechisms, who do mischief in country places, it is the curés who try to get at electors through their wives."

"An electoral catechism—could I procure one here?" I asked. "Well," he replied, "the sale of these books is now prohibited, but you being a stranger, could, I daresay, procure one." Which I did, and this medley of politics and theology for babes I preserve as a curiosity.<sup>1</sup> After a perusal of it, one can understand the repugnance excited in a child's mind, not only for the Republic, but for Jews and other so-called heretics.

St. Lô enjoys the distinction of having given birth to Octave Feuillet, the most brilliant writer of what may be called boudoir romance. His heroes and heroines perpetually suggest the

<sup>1</sup> See Note 9, Electoral Catechisms.

perfumer and the milliner. We cannot help feeling that they are ready at any moment to appear on the stage, every hair in its place, not a pin requiring adjustment. He wrote French, however, as only a true artist can write it, and in *La Morte* touched the heart of things.

But for the cruelty to animals witnessed here, and the unsanitary condition of hotels, the *chef-lieu* of La Manche would afford agreeable holiday quarters. It is very prettily situated, and the surrounding scenery home-like and pastoral.

Before quitting Normandy let me recommend to all readers interested in rural France the late M. Baudrillart's exhaustive work. It is a complete picture of this province, social, moral, and economic, from the Middle Ages until the present day. Already, in the fourteenth century, a marked degree of material prosperity and enlightenment had been reached here.

"Le pays de sapience," as it was called, was also a region in which the mass of people fared better, wore better clothes, and were less ignorant than in any other of France. It was a country in which folks danced the most. "How old France loved distraction!" exclaims our author, as he dwells on this characteristic of the laborious, shrewd, hard-headed, some are tempted to say, hard Norman peasant. No *fête*, public or private, went off without a dance. At Champeaux, near

Avranches, the villagers, for want of a more appropriate place, danced in the cemetery. Sometimes a cock was given to the best dancer, and upon such occasions all put on Sunday clothes. In certain respects the peasant fared better than his descendants,—at the present time many a small owner sending all his goods to the market, not even retaining poultry or eggs for home use. When there were neither roads nor markets, the former consumed a good deal of his produce himself. Even day labourers fared almost sumptuously. Witness certain contracts entered into by the religious bodies of Bayeux, St. Omer, and other places with their work-people. The stipulated fare consisted of wine, beer, cider, pork, cheese, eggs, fish, with fresh meat or fowls three times a week. Of course we must take into consideration the relative value of farmhouse produce at the time spoken of and in our own day. I have never yet found butter or poultry cheaper in any part of France, however remote, than in England!

The butter-making population of the Calvados alone obtain an annual revenue of just upon eighty millions of francs! Camembert cheese is sold to the amount of two millions. But, as M. Baudrilart points out, it is not by any single produce that the Norman peasant is enriched. His maxim is, "Turn everything to account." Thus,

great attention is paid to bee-keeping, wax in some districts forming an important export. The bees are carefully transferred from place to place in order that they may feed on the flowers most favourable to them. In spring they are carried to fields of clover and colza, in summer to patches of buckwheat, the pink and creamy-white blossoms, so poetically called by Michelet, "summer snow," being then in full flower. The honey is clarified by elaborate processes, and the inferior kind consumed at home. Whilst to a large extent holdings here do not exceed from five to ten hectares, in the plains we find farms of double and fourfold this size. In some villages the curious contract called *cheptel* is still in vogue. Farm servants or day labourers purchase with their savings one or more head of cattle or sheep, and place them with a farmer to be nourished and fattened, all profits of wool, milk, lambs, calves, being equally divided. A more ingenious way of utilising small savings could hardly be conceived. The worthy country-folks, as the rich cheese farmers of Brie in Champagne, live on good terms with the curé, but are no great church-goers. M. Baudrillart remarks that the cabaret is not the only demoralising element. As I mentioned when describing the Pays de Caux, there is often a strict line of demarcation between class and class. The great man in a village may be aristocrat

or parvenu ; except on the occasion of an election he seldom seeks the acquaintance of his humbler neighbours. The author draws attention to another fact, on which Mr. Hamerton has also commented in one of his impartial and deeply-interesting works upon France. This is the absence of anything in the shape of imaginative literature among the peasants. In Protestant England the mind of the uninstructed is nurtured on the Bible ; but the Roman religion forbids its use, and there has been nothing to take its place. The old legends with which popular gatherings were enlivened have long vanished from the memories of the people, whilst the poetry embodied in French national history has not been put before them. The result has been a craving for police reports and criminal trials, by no means calculated to have a good moral effect. The foundation of village libraries and the laïcisation of national education will gradually alter this state of things. Already, in one department, the Calvados, we find that within the last few years 472 adult classes have been opened in various places, the number of pupils being between three and four thousand."

There is another point to be mentioned. In spite of its amazing prosperity, the statistics show a decrease in the population of this province. Thus within the years 1870-80, whilst Brittany had gained over 60,000 souls, Normandy had lost

upwards of 10,000. How are such figures to be accounted for? M. Baudrillart points, firstly, to the determination of the peasant to restrict the number of his children to his means of support; secondly, to the migration of large numbers to Paris and the neighbouring industrial towns. Again, the tendency of agriculture towards stock-rearing rather than tillage must be taken into account, the former requiring fewer hands. In Brittany the reverse is the case, every year more land being put under cultivation.

### III

#### MANCHE (*continued*)

"AT Pont Orsin" (Pontorson), wrote Arthur Young in 1788, "enter Bretagne. My entry into Bretagne gives me the one idea of its being a miserable province." Quiet, gracious landscapes, not very varied, yet grateful to the eye, separate St. Lô from this little town, where, according to departmental geography, we are still in Normandy. Pontorson is a convenient halting-place for tourists bound to Mont St. Michel; a far greater attraction to the agriculturist is its proximity to the polders,<sup>1</sup>—stretches of marsh reclaimed within our own time from the sea, and called after the Dutch tracts of the same kind. The auberge, inn I hardly venture to call it, is at least a hundred years behind the time in matters long held among ourselves of the first importance, but possesses the advantage of being at the extreme end of the town, and therefore quiet. We obtained two airy rooms looking into a large garden and the

<sup>1</sup> See Note 10, Polders.

open country, and found low charges, good food, and great civility. The town itself is not interesting, but the old church and covered market-place lend it a character of its own, and from the western side a pleasant walk by the canal leads to St. Malo. Sunday here was very peaceful; the men in clean blue blouses, the women with white coifs, strolled about, chatting quietly. Although a side street is composed almost exclusively of cafés, no brawling or sounds of unseemly carouse were heard. It is a fine handsome race that we find here; indeed, a more striking physique I have never seen than that of Pontorson and Mont St. Michel. It is worth while making the journey to the latter place if only to see the master and mistress of the Hôtel Poulard. Here, too, as in the Cévennes, no one seems the least conscious of being thus favoured by nature. The splendid-looking creature in blue blouse or white coif, as far as good looks are concerned, is unaffectedness itself. What most strikes a stranger is the general look of robustness. Is the cider-drinking partly accountable? Be this as it may, let those who talk of the physical deterioration of the human race visit these regions.

It is about an hour's drive from Pontorson to the famous polders or asparagus beds of M. Touzard. The broad, straight road leads



through a succession of apple orchards ; rich and beautiful as is the effect of autumn, the blossoming season must be more enchanting still. To-day we gaze upon an unbroken perspective of deep green and brilliant red, the crimsoning fruit shining out of the unfaded foliage. Here are no gradations of colour, all is sharp contrast as in an orangery.

Enormous quantities of buckwheat are grown about the trees or in patches outside the orchards. This crop is cultivated for domestic consumption only, not for animals ; buckwheat flour is of daily use among the poorest for the making of galettes. On our way we pass farmhouses with gardens, neither very tidily kept, and women and girls busy in the fields. Here quite a different state of things is found to that lately described in the Pays de Caux. The agricultural populations of France show, indeed, as many varieties as the crops.

Half an hour's drive brings us in sight of Mont St. Michel, and this far-off aspect, to my thinking, is the grandest of all. The tremendous pyramid of rock, rising from the sea abruptly as Montserrat from the plains beyond Barcelona, is here a fairy thing, cloud structure in tints of pearl and amethyst, apparently destined to melt away whilst we gaze.

A richly-wooded hill rises over against the vast estate I have come to visit ; here, amid the

foliage, the owner has built himself a château commanding a view of farmhouse, buildings, and polders, the latter forming a parallelogram two hundred and fifty hectares in extent along the coast. The farmhouse is handsome, with well-kept flower-gardens front and back, around clean, spacious barns and stables. In the absence of M. Touzard, his brother-in-law received me most kindly, at once quitting his occupation to show me everything.

A few minutes' walk and we are in the midst of luxuriant crops, stretches of clover, lucerne, potatoes, and cornlands, already ploughed for sowing; between us and the sea, sweeps of silvery green, beyond, Mont St. Michel, here clearer and more beautiful in colour and outline than before; farther still, mere pencillings against the sky, Cancale and Granville. The sea itself is invisible. Those sweeps of silvery green are the asparagus beds we have come to see,—in all respects a dainty crop, and possessing a curious history.

In my former volume I described the extraordinary and rapid transformation of the seaboard around Aigues-Mortes. The changes that have taken place here are hardly less wonderful, though dating farther back, and of slower march. Only a few years ago the vine-girt city of Saint Louis looked down upon barren swamps. Half

a century will soon have elapsed since the white sands of this Norman coast were metamorphosed into field and garden.

Why this especial soil, for soil it may now be called, suits the asparagus better than any other, none can explain ; so it is, the choicest kind of the choicest vegetable grows upon sandy wastes within our own time reclaimed from the sea. When seen on this large scale the feathery foliage makes a dainty appearance ; a mile long, close under the protecting dyke, stretch these asparagus beds, the eye resting delightedly on the masses of waving green. The dyke is from six to eight feet high, its sides grass grown, the inner, further protected by a deep trench, the outer by huge fragments of rock piled against it as a wall. In 1869 similar outworks were clean swept away by a huge tidal wave, and the entire crops of the polder utterly destroyed. As a rule, the tide rarely approaches the dyke more than once in six months, and such mishaps are phenomenal.

The cultivation of the asparagus, like that of the vine, is very elaborate, and here is entirely confided to women. It takes five years to mature an asparagus bed, exactly the period necessary for the formation of a vineyard, in both cases a good deal of outlay being involved. The plants last from fifteen to twenty years. Between April and October, women and girls are employed in

the cultivation ; every process, down to that of tying in bunches and packing for Paris and London being performed by them on the premises. As we stood on the dyke, M. Touzard came up, an eminently practical as well as scientific agriculturist, and the creator of these asparagus beds. He soon called my attention to a little procession of workwomen moving towards the opposite bank.

“ See,” he said, “ it is four o’clock, the hour of the collation as it is called here. We will go round and watch the little party at their meal.” Chatting cheerfully, the asparagus growers now quitted their work ; all wore good, tidy, suitable clothes, and had white cotton handkerchiefs tied round their chins, I presume to protect them against the sharp points of the foliage. They sat down in a row, each having beside her a stone bottle of cider, and a basket, from which were taken huge pieces of bread and butter, cheese, or galettes of buckwheat. The faces, on the whole, were honest and good. My informant described the population as sober, thrifty, and easy to deal with. The greater proportion possess a cottage, patch of ground, with cow, pig, or poultry. Only upon one occasion has a rowdy element come to the fore. A short time ago a new concession of land was granted by the company owning the polders ; as the village folk were in the habit of feeding their stock on these

waste lands, a bitterly hostile feeling was aroused ; the entire community rose up in arms against what they considered as an infringement of their rights, and order was not restored without police intervention. The women and girls now bivouac-ing on the dyke looked the reverse of revolution-ary. With excellent appetite they now fell to, forming a picturesque group. We are apt to be shocked at the amount of field-work done by Frenchwomen ; are not such conditions as these healthier and wholesomer, from a moral point of view, than those of our own mills and factories ? Although asparagus is by far the most important crop here, almost anything but the vine will flourish on this white sandy soil. The climate is too cold for the vine. Two crops of lucerne are produced in the year, and the Swede turnip is largely cultivated, this culture dating from the last twenty years. Nitrate for manure is imported in considerable quantities from America.

As we returned to the house we passed a shepherd advancing with his two dogs and flock ; the automatic behaviour of the dogs was worthy of study, one keeping the sheep on the left side the other on the right, both without intermission running backwards and forwards in the discharge of their duty. Such shepherd dogs work as hard as any day labourers, yet how little is thought of their comfort or pleasure ! At night they are

tied up, at dawn their long day's work begins, and this is the yearly round. Horses are kept for purposes of tillage, cows not being worked on the land. Here the calves, although tethered, were out in the open air. "It would be much better to give them pasturage afield," remarked my host, "but that is difficult in our unenclosed land."

There is no accounting for tastes, and M. Touzard told me a curious story concerning his asparagus. Some years ago he despatched a consignment to a certain town in England. The consignee wrote word that to his regret the asparagus, although of magnificent quality, was wholly unsaleable. His customers would only eat the green kind as grown in English gardens.

Much valuable information I gathered from these two gentlemen, both skilful agriculturists and of wide experience, also on the best terms with their English correspondents. Tastes differ, not only in matters of the table, but others far more important. That afternoon spent on the breezy polders, market gardens reclaimed from the sea, in such excellent company, pleased and profited me much more than the obligatory expedition next day.

Still one of the sights of the world, Mont St. Michel was robbed of some glory when it ceased to be an island, and in the eyes of the Romanist

world, when it ceased to be a pilgrimage. All who wish to realise the full grandeur of the place should time their visit between October and May. During the summer season you are hustled and elbowed by excursionists as unceremoniously as at a railway station on bank holiday. The overwhelming imposingness is marred by a sense of flurry and crowding. Indeed, a visit to Mont St. Michel is a nightmare. We seem to be rammed into a tube without room to stir. The long narrow street dividing escarpment and sea becomes so densely thronged that you are swayed to and fro by the living, moving mass, literally wedged in, and, as vehicle after vehicle discharges its burden, the scene becomes one of indescribable confusion. The long dusty drive from Pontorson in draughty waggonettes, one and all as full as they can be; the heat, tumult, and fatigue are not without compensations, quite apart from the picturesque. The natural, architectural, and historic attractions of Mont. St. Michel have been described again and again by competent writers. A wholly novel and refreshing experience remains to be mentioned. •

The troop after troop of tourists—tens, scores, hundreds, most of whom have come from long distances—naturally require breakfast. In an unbroken stream they pour into the one large hotel of the place, the first object that meets their eyes on

landing. In spite of the little artificial isthmus now connecting it with the continent, Mont St. Michel looks as if it were still on an island. Everything is in readiness for the mid-day meal—temptingly-spread table, neat waiting-maids, a place for all.

We sit down then, and certainly are served with as excellent a collation as the most fastidious could desire. Every dish is of good quality and cooked in the best possible manner. The only drawback at the end—certes, an unusual one—is the difficulty of paying! We are allowed to take our fill, to order Bordeaux or what we choose, but no one will take our money! So the first great crowd of regalers pours out, the hungry multitude waiting outside pours in, and the same thing is repeated; a first-rate meal awaits all, but, as it seems, there is no bill to pay.

At last, after some difficulty, we ascertain that those, I suppose, who wish to pay—for any who would might slip off without—can do so in the kitchen at two o'clock. It is now noon; some scale the winding stone stairs leading to citadel and church, others order coffee in the street; none, let us hope, forget that permission to pay at two o'clock in the kitchen!

If any do, they are more than punished for such abuse of confidence. This kitchen, which also serves the purpose of bureau, is really the sight of Mont St. Michel—picturesqueness, fine



architecture, ramparts, panoramas, oubliettes, we can see any day, but not twice, even in France, such a spectacle as this.

The enormous wood fire is now being allowed to die out, one or two young men cooks in white are boiling coffee, and at the other end of the room, which opens on to the street, sit as handsome a man and as handsome a woman as you would find throughout the length and breadth of Normandy, which is saying a good deal. Mine host and hostess, who have been hitherto engaged in cooking for several hundred people, are no longer young, but still in their prime—dark-eyed, rich complexioned, with regular features and charming expression, they are perhaps more striking now than when slim youth and maiden. What strikes the stranger is the easy calm with which they sit there, besieged by a dozen clamouring tourists at once. Monsieur meantime quietly pencils the bills—taking his customer's word in the matter of extras, wine, coffee, and the like; at another table, Madame as smilingly receives your money, and hands you your change; and all this time, be it remembered, the whole transaction had been conducted on the principle of voluntary taxation. There was no kind of compulsion as to payment; those who might, paid, those who would not, went away with an evil conscience.

The experience was an amusing one, and conclusively proved two things. Make folks happy, and you raise them morally. Lives the miscreant who could enjoy that ample and appetising breakfast, then slink off in debt? No, Monsieur and Madame, we may be sure, find their confidence well placed, and as their *clientèle* is a very heterogenous one, the reflection is gratifying.

At Mont St. Michel we meet as mixed a company as at an international exhibition. Dinard, I should rather say Brighton over the water, boasts of a much more select or at least exclusive company. There was a time when English tourists fondly imagined themselves in France as soon as they had reached the pretty little watering-place over against St. Malo. They are still on French soil, that is all one can say. At Dinard, lawn tennis, golf, English society, an English church, and big hotels are to be enjoyed at the rate of a pound and upwards per day. Some of us might think these privileges dear at the money. To our French neighbours, especially the novelist, wishing to study insular manners and customs, Dinard offers a rare opportunity. No better place on the continent for observing what in French is called *un flirt*.



## PART IV

PROVINCE: BRITTANY



## DEPARTMENTS: CÔTES DU NORD, MORBIHAN

OF picturesque Brittany, surely the last word has been long since said! Of the Brittany of to-day we have much to learn. As I turn back to the latest guide-books and maps, I find myself in a new country, not a spot I visited so expensively and laboriously in 1875 but is now accessible by railway,—Carnac, Quiberon, Pont l'Abbé, St. Pol de Léon,—how wearisome were the long drives or joltings by diligence thither, at that time a traveller's only resource!

Accessibility to pleasure-seekers is a secondary matter. The effect of improved means of communication and transport upon the inhabitants, the people who produce and manufacture, who buy and sell, is incalculable. A wave of enlightenment and well-being has spread over the entire province. The Armorica of legend and fable has disappeared. Sewing-machines now replace the spinning-wheel in rustic homes, French

is universally spoken, the *veillée* or story-telling at night is out of fashion, every one now being able to read for himself. The gorgeous costumes, common twenty-five years ago, are fast disappearing ; if the painter and the poet shrug their shoulders with disdain, the lover of progress must admit that their loss is not without compensation.

We must take account of many factors in the enormous advance witnessed on every side,—increased railway communication, the opening of primary and secondary schools in remote districts, the certificate of proficiency now required of both men and women teachers, the schools of agriculture established in the towns, local agricultural shows, the great industrial Exhibitions of 1878 and 1889, cheapened travel, have revolutionised the most backward and stationary region of France. Two improvements remain to be effected, namely, the introduction of domestic sanitation in every town and village, and drastic enforcement of the Loi Grammont for the prevention of cruelty to animals.

The statement often unreflectingly accepted in England and openly avowed by French reactionaries, that the Republic has put down, or endeavoured to put down, religion, is for once and for all disproved by a visit to Brittany. English readers who wish to obtain a true view of the case cannot do better than follow my example ;

they are especially recommended to revisit scenes familiar to them under the Third Empire.

Twenty-five years ago Brittany was represented in the educational map of France by a jet-black blot. In the words of Jules Simon, himself Breton born, schools did not exist in country places, you had to go to the towns for sight of a school. Hardly one per cent of the women could read or write, and only a very small percentage of the men. Few of the elder folks in Morbihan understood French, and with this dense ignorance went grossest superstition. When, in 1853, cholera devastated Finistère, Emile Souvestre tells us that he asked a priest what precautionary measures were being taken against the scourge. The curé, without a word, led him to the churchyard and silently pointed to a group of newly-made graves dug in readiness for the victims.

How reluctantly the rural clergy of the present day fall in with modern ideas I can testify from personal experience. Will it be believed that during September of the present year, when cholera was raging in the western part of Finistère, only by a telegram from the Minister of the Interior was an enormous pilgrimage prevented from starting for Lourdes? The pilgrimage, to be made up at Quimper, and consisting of over a thousand of the poorer classes recruited from the infected regions, was, therefore, to traverse France



from one end to the other, with what disastrous results the reader may conceive. Yet without doubt anathemas were fulminated on the following Sunday from every pulpit in Finistère. The Republic had prevented the pious from worshipping Notre Dame of Lourdes. That the seeds of an awful pestilence should be sown broadcast throughout the country was of course not worth considering.

It must be admitted that the action of the railway companies was reprehensible in the extreme. In their case the only motive could have been immediate gain, and they had not, as was the case with the priests, committed themselves by promises made long beforehand.

With inrooted superstition cruelty goes hand in hand. Almost till our own times the wreckers of Finistère pursued their diabolical trade unpunished. I have been assured that nonagenarians can remember the concerted wrecks and orgies following the spoils. At the present day, the coast of this department alone is protected by twenty-three lighthouses and three hundred beacons.

Even among the better educated classes, Brittany was very behindhand in morality. Until the Revolution, Nantes was the foremost seat of the slave-trade. The handsome mansions bordering the quays were erected by rich traffickers in

human flesh. The effect of that ghastly trade upon morality is well brought out by Emile Souvestre in his *En Bretagne*. Delicate ladies, young wives and mothers, wept at the prospect of diminished fortune; that the abolition of the "Traite des noirs" meant a moral revolution never occurred to them. I may as well here remind the reader that the slave-trade, abolished by the Convention in 1794, was re-established by Napoleon I., and it remained for the Republic of 1848 to undo his work.

It will be seen, then, that the most Catholic region of France, a region in which the priest was the only authority, the priest's approval the only standard of right and wrong, remained far behind other provinces alike in morals and mental acquirements.

Let us now turn from the Brittany of former days to the Brittany of to-day, and see what the so-called enemies of religion have done for its advancement.

Just a year later than the journey recorded in my last chapter, I re-entered Ille and Vilaine. The weather was glorious, the season of Dinard had only opened a few weeks before, yet the hotels were fast emptying. Such facts may well excuse the excessive charges of this pretty watering-place. Even whilst putting a maximum price upon everything, hotel-keepers can hardly make

their short seasons pay. One effect of the tropical summer of 1893 has been a superabundant, an unprecedented, an overwhelming apple crop. Quite unimaginable was the aspect of Normandy from Bayeux to the Breton border, a long day's railway journey lying through one unbroken stretch of apple orchard, the formality of their arrangement atoned for by the glory of the fruit, richest crimson, bright-gold, pale-green, rose-pink ; every tree was laden with apples, in some cases weighed down, shattered by the weight, the branches trailing on the ground. Here and there, a tree stood out positively illuminated as by ruby-coloured globes, nor were the more subdued tints less beautiful. I am told that it will be impossible to utilise anything like the entire crop for cider, the barrels at command falling far short of requirements. The remainder will be used for the manufacture of alcohol—220 litres of cider (the alcohol is distilled from cider, not apples) will produce 12 litres of brandy, even thus, the returns being very profitable. Within living memory no such crop has been seen.

Lovers of the picturesque will enter Brittany by its charming water-way. It is a delightful two hours' journey from Dinard to Dinan by the Rance ; in bright September weather, the clear green water, cloudless sky, and brilliant foliage clothing the banks, attain almost southern depth

of tone. As we halt to pick up passengers, a blind beggar and ancient woman on the quay hold out their hands to catch sous, reminding us that we are in the land of beggary. No cultivation is seen here, only wooded slopes, rocks feathered with greenery, and from time to time, a modern *château* perched high above the water's edge. Quaint fishing-boats, draped with reddish-brown nets, at anchor, their slender masts turned outward drooping curve, or scudding along with single sail outspread, make pretty pictures.

The railroad covering the same distance takes us through apple orchards, enclosed meadows, and fields of ruddy buckwheat, the crimson cone-shaped sheaves making a curious appearance. It is a harvest field of ruby red. These two brilliant crops are the principal characteristics of the landscape; whilst the uniformly enclosed fields and meadows recall our own country.

Dinan, second town of the *Côtes du Nord*, is an agreeable semi-English halting-place for the economist,—for the economical it has long since lost charms. We can no longer go to France for cheapened housekeeping. The handsome English church, and French-English universally spoken, nevertheless attest the popularity of this picturesquely-situated place. Its fine mediæval donjon and gateways, lovely river, and charming woodland scenery afford countless excursions

I should say it is as healthy a site as any in Europe.

The half-profit system is in full force in the Côtes du Nord, whilst round about Dinan most of the farms are let on lease by large owners. Fifty acres may be accepted as the average holding, whilst the larger proportion of peasants possess a cottage and plot of ground. Here and there we encounter beggars, but the country-people are almost invariably well and suitably dressed, the women in spotless white coifs, stout black or blue cloth dresses, and good shoes and stockings. The type is favourable, and the old women are often very handsome; the older women get here the handsomer they seem to grow! Never anywhere have I beheld such fine-looking grandames. Doubtless an out-of-door life contributes greatly to this striking physique.

In the following pages I shall describe the new laicised communal schools now opened throughout Brittany, and the educational institutions conducted by priests and nuns, exactly on the plan of our own voluntary schools. The reader will then judge for himself how far the charges brought against the French government by the reactionary party are correct. We now find national as well as voluntary schools in almost every commune, by far the most important progress to be noted in our survey.

Bitter hostility was, naturally, displayed, and

indeed is still displayed, by the rural clergy, to the opening of these lay communal schools, in other words, to the carrying out of the great educational reforms due to M. Jules Ferry.

The mayor of a commune, the schools of which I visited, although a good Catholic, strictly observing the ordinances of his Church, has been the victim of persecutions without end. Preached against in his parish church, and in his own presence, thwarted at every possible opportunity, unmercilessly maligned in the performance of his civic duties,—again and again, this public-spirited citizen and truly Christian gentleman has been obliged to appeal to the bishop of the diocese; again and again, the offenders were reprimanded, only to begin anew.

Let me here relate two instances of the way in which a Breton parish priest punishes those of his flock who prefer the best education to be had for their children. It is the custom in Brittany for parents and children to hear mass on breaking up and reassembling of the schools. In this especial *bourg* or village of three thousand and odd souls, are now four schools, two national and two voluntary, but as the former give a better education and a certificate of proficiency, as furthermore they are gratuitous, quite half of the children of both sexes attend them instead of the self-supporting schools held by priests and nuns, in which a

fee is charged, and in which, although teachers must possess the elementary certificate, they are free to teach as much or as little as they like.

The curé of the village was requested by the mayor to say mass for these children on reassembling after the holidays, and promised to do so. Parents and children collected in the churchyard, waited and waited to no purpose. On finding that the priest directly refused to fulfil his promise, the mayor advised the little crowd to enter the church and recite mass for themselves. This they did, and came away satisfied. The curé next tried to touch the poor people in what is generally supposed a vulnerable part, namely, their pockets. All children not attending the clerical schools were suddenly called upon to pay a halfpenny for their seat in church. This shameful proceeding was stopped by remonstrance from the mayor in high quarters.

The village in question lies between Dinan and the coast, and very pretty is the drive thither between apple orchards, turnip and clover fields, and stretches of brilliant buckwheat in cone-shaped sheaves. The place has a prosperous look, with handsome well-kept church and well-built streets, nothing, indeed, could less resemble the squalid Breton village of a generation ago.

Finding the mayor out, we called upon his niece, who immediately conducted us to the new

communal schools for girls, opened, as well as those for boys, only a few years ago. The building, an ancient convent, is very spacious and airy, with large playground. The boys' schools are at some distance off, and form an imposing block, commanding a beautiful view ; these were erected by the municipality, aided by the State. As we approached we heard the voices of children apparently at prayer, and our conductress asked us to wait a moment.

"Lessons always begin and close with prayer," she said ; "catechism being taught after school hours to all children whose parents desire it."

Here, then, were disproved the monstrous charges laid to the door of the Republic. Whilst no dogma is imposed, and the simple prayers opening and closing the day's work may be joined in by Protestant, Jew, or, for the matter of that, Mahometan, Catholic parents may here have their children prepared for their first communion as elsewhere. Soon the doors opened, and the children poured out, gentle and simple, rich and poor, in these villages, sitting side by side at school. For the most part, the little girls were neatly dressed, only a few were poorly clad ; nothing was seen of rags, tawdriness, or dirt. The little niece of our hostess, plainly dressed as the rest, ran up to us, laden with books. Then the schoolmistress came out, the first lay



schoolmistress I had ever seen in Western France. Twenty years ago I might have sought such a phenomenon in vain. From one end of Brittany to the other, girls' schools were then presided over by nuns, their only certificate of proficiency being a letter from a bishop, a sort of "character," called "*une lettre d'obédience*." This lay schoolmistress was a modest, self-possessed, intelligent Breton woman about five-and-thirty. She wore a simple black dress and pretty coif, but although very likely peasant born, behaved like a well-bred lady; receiving us with great affability, she led us from class-room to class-room, beginning with that of the babies, "*l'école infantine*."

The first object that met my eye as I entered was a crucifix hanging over the chimney-piece. Yet it is affirmed and believed that no such symbol is to be found in French national schools! A crucifix hangs in each class-room of this Breton school, opened in accordance with the so-called atheistical code of M. Ferry.

On the walls were pictures representing events in French history, reading-cards, and other helps to infantine study. In the second class-room were magnificent maps, pictures, and diagrams illustrating the elements of natural history, botany, and geology, whilst in the upper class-room, that of "*les petites savantes*," as our charming guide called her more advanced pupils, were small

mineralogical collections, cartoons explaining the first principles of geometry and the metric system, the latter being also taught by means of weights and measures as supplied by Messrs. Hachette. In fact, everything was taught here that any child, no matter its position in life, is bound to know, a solid foundation being laid for the wider instruction to come.

In one room we found a young under-teacher holding a catechism class. I must here explain that her superior, although allowed to remain, would not fulfil the conditions now required of candidates for such a post. Headmistresses in national schools must now possess the higher certificate, or *brevet supérieur*, as well as the *brevet pédagogique*, which answers to that of our College of Preceptors. One of the subordinates of this lady, quite a young girl, possessed higher certificates, and was about to proceed to the great training college at Sèvres.

Between such a school as that just described and the voluntary school held by nuns is a wide gap. True that the latter must be provided with • the elementary brevet or certificate of proficiency, but as is the case with religious orders of the other sex, they are at liberty to teach as much or as little as they choose. Thus parents of children confided to their care have no guarantee whatever as to the education afforded ; moreover,

the certificates answering to those of our own Sixth Standard, Junior and Senior local examinations are the only ones recognised, and are only granted by the Minister of Education. As such certificates are of the greatest value alike to girls and boys, it is only natural that the national is preferred to the voluntary school, even by strictly orthodox parents.

After our survey we returned to the mayor's house, now finding him at home. Over afternoon tea we chatted of rural progress in Brittany.

"You will find no great advance among our peasants," he said. "The Breton character is too tenacious, too stubborn, to accept initiative easily. I will give you an example. This year has been one of almost unheard-of drought. Forage and litter are hardly to be had at any price. I accordingly decided to try peat as a litter, and ordered some from Holland ; dry, clean, and warm, it affords an excellent substitute for straw. It was only by the stern exercise of authority that I could induce the people employed on my own farm to try the experiment ; they did their utmost to resist."

We were taken round the farm buildings to see the new litter, and certainly nothing can be better.

Here as elsewhere every one was overwhelmed by a superabundance of apples, barrels and storage

falling far short of the general requirements. It is sad to reflect that the surplus, turned into cider brandy, will, in all probability, increase the spread of intemperance, through what is already, perhaps, the least temperate region of rural France.

Between Dinan and the coast are farms and *métairies* from two or three to a hundred acres, the principal crops being potatoes, cabbages for cattle, turnips, buckwheat, and cider apples. Very little poverty meets the eye, although our host assured us that want and professional beggary are still largely found in the towns. These professional beggars are mere bundles of rags, and often blind or deformed.

I fear, in one respect, the honest, tidy, sober peasants flocking into Dinan on market days are not far ahead of their forerunners—I mean with regard to animals. Whilst I cannot say that I noticed any brutality to horses, the treatment of calves and poultry is cruel in the extreme; the former, tied by the legs, are bundled about just as if they were bags of potatoes, the latter are carried alive, head downwards, by well-dressed folks. No one seems to think that a poor little calf, perhaps only a few days old, or a chicken, has any feeling whatever. It remains for the present government of France to insist upon the carrying out of the *Loi Grammont*.

As I journey from Dinan to St. Briec in

the middle of September, the weather is sultry as in July. French tourists, soldiers returning from the manœuvres, reservists having performed their twenty-eight days' service, seminarists, nuns, priests, and country-folk crowd the platforms. It is difficult to obtain a seat except in a compartment of the first class. Here let me venture the remark that tourists are left to themselves on these lines. At crowded junctions you have to carry your hand-baggage and find your especial train, one of many, as best you can, no one to offer the slightest help. Especially on Saturday evenings, the confusion is indescribable, streams of passengers screaming, shouting, hustling each other; dogs, guns, bundles in the densely-packed carriages: nothing done calmly and quietly.

As I have unconditional praise for so much I write of, it is only fair to give the other side of the picture. Certainly the comfort of railway travellers is not much considered in France. Third class is out of the question, second class often as uncomfortable as can be, first class is only available for certain distances. The object of French railway companies often seems to be to induce people *not* to travel. Such, at least, is my own experience.

St. Brieuc, prettily situated bishopric and *chef-lieu* of the Côtes du Nord, looks much as it did when visited by me just upon twenty years ago.

It now possesses a good modern hotel (d'Angleterre), and from the busy little port of the Ligué tourists may reach Jersey by regular steamers in a few hours. Hence, as from Paimpol, scene of Loti's novel, fishing-boats set forth in spring for Iceland and Newfoundland, returning in October. On this northern coast the women are the husbandmen and general managers (by the way, a phase omitted from Loti's moving little story), the men when at home doing nothing. It is the housewife who invests the earnings of the season's fishing. The voyage occupies six weeks each way, and the fishing six months. Much drinking and quarrelling goes on during these long absences; and many a man, I am assured, said to have been lost *dans le brouillard*, in the fog, has met his fate otherwise. The arrival of the convoys may also be witnessed at St. Malo, and is a strange and pathetic sight. In expectation of their husbands' return, the women set out for the port in carts, the men, on their side, as soon as they sight land, putting on Sunday clothes.

The first query of the women is, "Are any missing?" and the almost invariable answer is in the affirmative. Then follows the shock of disclosure: the bereaved mother, wife, sweetheart, daughter, wailing amid her more fortunate companions.

These Bretons are excellent sailors, the backbone

of the French navy, and as all are liable to be called out for service after a certain age, they receive a small pension. They are, indeed, in Loti's words, wedded to the sea, and delight in the strange life of which he has given us some idea. To portray it to the life, one must follow the brave reckless fellows *dans le brouillard*, scene of many an unrecorded tragedy.

Arthur Young reached St. Bricuc by way of Montauban and Lamballe, and in piteous language describes the nakedness and rags of the people. From the former place he wrote, in 1788: "The poor people seem poor indeed, the children terribly ragged, if possible worse clad than if with no clothes at all; as to shoes and stockings, they are luxuries. One-third of what I have seen of this province seems uncultivated, and nearly all of it in misery." To-day the junction of Lamballe is crowded with well-dressed peasants, the women in spotless white coifs, good black dresses, and neat shoes and stockings, the men wearing blue blouses over broadcloth. They are returning from market, and have big baskets of groceries and other purchases.

On the morning after my arrival, the departmental professor of agriculture called upon me, and a brief conversation with him prepared my mind for the changes I was to find in the Côtes du Nord.

When I suggested that general progress throughout Brittany must be considerable, this gentleman raised his hands and made reply—"Inimaginable" (not to be imagined). Certain corroborative statistics I add at the close of this volume.<sup>1</sup> One factor of agricultural progress has been the laying down of single lines of railway from the coast, for the transport of marine débris used as manure. This *sable coquiller* will be described farther on. Agricultural shows have also done much to improve the breeding of stock and increase crops. The professor informed me that the Chinese system of planting out or *répiquage*, is applied to wheat with marvellous results. On one farm this system had produced 100 hectolitres per hectare; the maximum attained hitherto being 33!

Industrial exhibitions have told immediately upon the sale of agricultural machinery. Thus during the year 1878 only four steam threshers were purchased throughout the entire department. But farmers of all classes visited the Paris Exhibition of that year with the following results. In 1879 the number of these machines purchased for the Côtes du Nord had risen to forty-nine. The Centennial Exhibition of 1889 and the agricultural show held at St. Brieuc in 1891 respectively doubled and quadrupled sales during the

<sup>1</sup> See Note 12, Agricultural Progress in Brittany.



years 1890 and 1891. In 1892 only 15 of the 389 communes of this department were unprovided with steam threshing-machines.

The consumption of artificial manures shows proportionate increase. The quantity of superphosphates used in 1892 was seven times that of 1890. But it is necessary to turn from statistics to observation, above all to compare experiences, before we can realise that "inimaginable" of the professor. Only those who knew the Brittany of twenty years ago can understand how much has been done.

This gentleman strongly advised me to visit the agricultural penitentiary of St. Ilan, about two miles and a half from the town. Accordingly, provided with his letter introductory to the Father Superior in charge of this establishment, I set off.

It takes some time nowadays to clear the suburbs of St. Brieuc, then past substantially built farmhouses, well-cultivated fields and apple-orchards, we are soon in sight of the charming bay. Rain had followed the tropic heat of the day before, bringing down sacks of apples not valuable enough to be picked up. Everywhere people were busy getting in their buckwheat, that homely yet lucrative crop, without which the farmer here were lost. What the vine is to the southerner, the *blé noir* is to the Breton peasant. Little, indeed, do we imagine that this wine-red

crop has any affinity as a source of wealth with the vine ; but so indeed it is. The *blé noir* costs little to cultivate, feeds the bee with its flowers, nourishes the cultivator, constitutes a valuable article of commerce, its grain supplying the poulterers of Paris and the distillers of Holland. We may, indeed, compare these wine-red harvests to a Burgundian vintage.

The peasant's cart-horses looked uniformly in good condition, and their owners were well clothed. Twenty years ago well-to-do farmers' wives near Nantes went barefoot, their feet thrust in sabots lined with straw. Sabots still clatter on the ill-paved Breton pavements, but every one wears good stockings, and, on Sundays and holidays, boots, very likely manufactured at Bristol ! The climate of this seaboard is very genial, and the soil extremely fertile. I was soon to find myself amid scenes of southern luxuriance.

The agricultural penitentiary in question has many features in common with that of Citeaux, described in my former volume. But I found here a milder régime, and, as far as I could gather, more disinterestedness on the part of the managing board,—here, as at Citeaux, members of a religious order. The penitentiary near Nuits, in the Côtes d'Or, can only be described as an industrial and agricultural concern carried on in the interests of its promoters. That of St. Ilan

is a training-school of gardeners and farmers, the lads, after their probation or apprenticeship, carrying the art of horticulture and advanced husbandry into remote districts. Although, therefore, such an institution is liable to grave abuse, as indeed are all philanthropic organisations in private hands, it is founded on sound principles, and appears calculated to work real good.

Cîteaux is half factory, half farm ; here the boys' lives are, for the most part, spent out of doors, lessons being chiefly done in winter, and the day's labour limited to eight hours. The temperate zone of St. Bricuc seems to have influenced the spirit of this reformatory for young criminals, whereas at the former place a Spartan regime is added to a Siberian climate.

I was courteously received by the reverend father, director of the penitentiary, his subordinates being missionaries or brethren of the Order of the Holy Ghost. St. Ilan was founded in 1843 by a layman, late owner of the estate of that name, now constituting the school-farm. My host was a cheery, rosy, kindly-looking man, past middle age. With natural pride he showed me his fruit- and vegetable gardens, all in perfect order, and testifying to the highest culture. A marvellous picture of fertility form these walled-in orchards and beds, clustered round the handsome church ; beyond, the calm blue sea and environing hills.

Here I saw pears and table apples of the first quality,—wall-fruit, of course, had been gathered, but parties of lads, under charge of a brother, were busy among the beds of choice vegetables. It may be imagined how useful is this thorough training to large numbers of boys in a country like Brittany, formerly flowerless, and, in remote districts, fruitless. If it were my lot to revisit this province years hence, I should expect to find every well-to-do peasant provided with a fruit and flower garden, and—why not?—a vineyard! In the milder regions, the vine ought to flourish, and, doubtless, would do so if properly cultivated. At Dinan we find magnolias and camellias flourishing out of doors all the year round, and the site is far from being the most favoured of this northern coast.

I was pleased to see a good recreation ground and gymnasium. To many of these poor boys the reformatory is a home. The reverend father told me that many in after life return on a visit, glad to renew old ties. He also said that only a small percentage ultimately went away and were wholly lost sight of. Nevertheless, I am of opinion that if young criminals, instead of being massed together, could always be boarded out, as is sometimes the case with foundlings in France, such a percentage would diminish, and the poor lads be rendered happier.

From St. Brieuc I took train to Quintin, a station on the line to Pontivy. We pass a pretty bit of country, the landscape here and there recalling England, meadows set round with tall hedges, above these rich forests. The wastes or "landes" of former days have almost entirely disappeared. Quintin is a prettily-placed little town on the river Gouët, around it vista upon vista of woods.

My errand was to St. Brandan, a *bourg* or village of 2000 souls, about a mile and half off. The road, betokening the granitic nature of the soil, winds upward amid charming home-like scenes, here and there a solidly-built farmhouse with orchard and garden, round about enclosed meadows and neatly-cultivated fields. The distant perspective of wide-stretching forest is very beautiful. I was most cordially received by the gentleman farmer to whom I carried a letter of introduction, and he immediately proposed a round of inspection. The dwelling-house, with well-laid-out grounds, is much what it would be in England, ornamental trees being planted round the house, and pretty walks leading to fine points of view. Here, in the heart of Brittany, amid the "landes, landes, landes" of Arthur Young, I found high-farming, machinery, stock, crops, all testifying to the most improved methods. The machinery occupied an enormous building, and comprised

sowing, reaping, mowing, and winnowing machines of latest French, English, and American make. I was next shown the storage on a large scale of straw of various kinds, mixed as in Picardy with the pulp of beetroot for cattle. Beetroot here is not grown for sugar. We then visited the stables and neat-houses, all well built and in perfect order, the cows and calves here having much more spacious quarters than in the former province and Normandy, and, being also unattached, enjoyed greater ease. In the centre of the vast farmyard lay a heap, or rather enormous mound, of farmhouse manure, and underneath a reservoir from which the liquid was pumped up on adding fresh straw. Other manures used are the scoria of dephosphated metals, alluded to in a former page, also kañnite, a German product, consisting of sulphate of potassium and magnesia, especially available for potatoes ; but by far the most valuable enrichment is that of the pulverised marine refuse called *sable coquiller*, dragged from a depth of several hundred feet off the coast of St. Briec. Throughout the department, at this time of the year, are seen heaps of this grayish-white substance ready to be spread on the soil. It is especially rich in phosphate.

My host next led me to see his splendid turnip crops, and what would Arthur Young have thought of such a spectacle, in the midst of a

region characterised by him as wastes—wastes—wastes—several acres of turnips forming a single field—one that would do honour to the best Suffolk farmer going.

The phenomenon, as indeed it must be called, created quite a sensation twenty-four years ago. So accustomed were the farmers here to patch-work cultivation—a few square yards of one crop, a few of another, a dozen in a single acre—that from far and wide the curious visited the first real turnip-field seen in Brittany.

Adjoining were fields of recently-sown turnips just up; these would be *repiqué*, or planted out later on; cabbages, largely grown for cattle, are cultivated in the same way, only apple trees breaking the expanse of large, hedged-in field. Flax is another important crop, and of cider apples, here as elsewhere, was a bewildering plethora.

But a far greater surprise was in store for me than the sight of the turnips. My entire experiences, indeed, at St. Brandan were what our French neighbours call *renversant*. I was next conducted to the dairy, to find a method of butter-making for which there is no other word but ideal. I have described the Swedish churn used in Normandy. The system here pursued is in every respect vastly superior. In the dairy is a tank several feet deep and two or three yards

long, which is supplied with spring water by a pipe. The milk, warm from the cow, put in a closed tin vessel, is plunged into this ice-cold water, and the cream being lighter, rises in globules. I saw an inch of cream on milk thus placed a short time before, each tin vessel having a tiny aperture covered with glass, permitting inspection. The cream, after removal, is allowed to ferment for twenty-four hours in a stone bowl, and then placed in another metal vessel ; into this a many-pronged fork-like instrument is thrust, communicating with the outside of a tube. The butter-maker has only to turn this machine a certain number of times, and the butter is made as certainly and satisfactorily as water is boiled on a fire. This method, called *la mode de Paris*, is not only the perfection of cleanliness, but of simplicity. When I recall the terrible ordeal that butter-making used to be in my childish days, I feel a pang. How often both mistress and maid wept over the butter "that would not come," and how often a good, honest girl lost her place because she had not "a cool hand." From first to last, the butter made in the manner just described never comes into contact with the fingers ; and, granted, of course, the quality of the milk, retains a uniform excellence of quality. Butter, as made in Suffolk a generation ago, differed regularly from week to week, and would often be a failure altogether.



Let us hope that our dairy farmers will have recourse to this delightful *mode de Paris*.

Between Rennes and Redon the scenery is very charming, and between Vannes and Auray, wastes are no longer the principal feature as in Arthur Young's time; nor do we find any longer "good houses of stone and slate without glass windows." Auray now, as on the occasion of my visit in 1875, welcomes the stranger, and in the pleasant Hôtel du Pavillon prices remain precisely what they were then. I found, alas! my charming landlady gone to her rest, and the beautiful chamber-maid, of whom all tourists wrote with rapture, replaced by others. Having grown old, the celebrated beauty of Auray is wise in retiring from the scene of former triumphs. Costume has not changed here any more than prices. But little else—always excepting the stone arrays of Carnac—has remained stationary.

The railway, opened some years since between Auray and Quiberon by way of Carnac, has of course, revolutionised this district; but I came quite unprepared for the tremendous changes awaiting me at both places. The line passes amid small enclosed fields and meadows, pine-woods, and bits of waste, the crops being buckwheat, cider apples, Indian corn, potatoes, and lucerne. The land prepared for sowing did great

credit to the farmer ; the pretty little black and white Breton cattle making pictures of every meadow. Brilliant are the hues of pine and gold-brown marsh as we approach the sea.

Carnac is immensely improved since my first visit. It is now, indeed, a flourishing *bourg* of 2000 and odd souls, with a little hotel ideally clean, a museum, handsome schools, and airy, wholesome streets. The ancient church struck me as far more beautiful and impressive than before. As we waited for a carriage to take us back to Auray by way of the menhirs, it was instructive to watch the boys awaiting the signal for afternoon school. There must have been fifty at least, all well dressed in good stockings, sabots, cloth trousers, and short blouse. As they played about there was no roughness or quarrelling, no impertinent curiosity testified to strangers, and on the church clock striking one, all poured into school with the alacrity of willing scholars.

At last we succeeded in obtaining a carriage, and I soon began to realise the transformation of the last few years. What the speculative builder is doing in suburban England, the peasant is doing in Brittany, the monoliths of Menec and Erdeven no longer rising from a wilderness as when first I saw them years ago.

From the pyramidal height of the little Mont St. Michel I look down upon the same panoramas

I had seen twenty years before, but how changed ! Little farmhouses with white walls and gray roofs now dot the plain ; bright green crops break the uniformity of the waste ; everywhere are signs of domesticity and encroaching civilisation. The plough and the harrow are at work, and if the scene is less impressive than of old, we can but rejoice in the signs of increased wellbeing.

Thanks to the French government, the prehistoric stones are safe. The builder, the husbandman, and the shepherd may metamorphose the landscape, but they cannot destroy its sublimity. The mysterious alleys of stone remain intact.

Two lads with bright intelligent faces, and speaking excellent French, led us to Kermario, a group of stones some distance from the majestic alleys of Menec. In 1875 I described my little guide here as "wild as an Arab, and speaking only Breton." The elder of these two boys had passed the examination of communal schools answering to our sixth standard, and proudly told us of his certificate. This, he said, would be very useful to him on being apprenticed out. His father was a labourer, earning a franc and a half a day, but possessed a bit of land and a cow or two.

"There was an English gentleman here not long ago," he said, "who could understand me when I spoke Breton. He came from Wales." I asked both lads several questions concerning

England, its form of government, name of capital geographical position, and both answered promptly and correctly.

Thus the rising generation of ancient Armorica is placed on a level with the rest of their countrymen, the loss of picturesqueness and romance being compensated by raised social and moral conditions. The almost savage-looking peasants of former days, long-haired, shaggy, quaintly costumed, are disappearing from even remote regions.

Continuing our journey to Quiberon by railway, route so tediously made by diligence twenty years ago, we find the pinewoods replaced by sea marsh, only broken here and there by cultivation, every field being evidently of recent date. Stumpy windmills and little villages perched above the level, vary the monotony; beyond these we see glittering white sands and sea, deep and warm in hue as the lake of Capri.

The "solitary, unspeakably wild and poetic drive to Fort Penthièvre" I described in my former travels, is certainly not quite the same thing as a comfortable half-hour's railway journey. But it is pleasant on this Sunday afternoon to see gendarmes and their wives, townsfolk and peasants, all well dressed, taking advantage of the cheap return tickets from this little station. The approach to Quiberon—gravestone of the Vendean

War!—is exquisitely beautiful, not less so the gracefully curved bay of smoothest, finest, silvery sand hemming a turquoise sea.

Until the construction of the railway a few years ago, Quiberon was a mere fishing village, occasionally visited by tourists on account of its historic interest. Here the *ancien régime* may be said to have yielded up the ghost, and its most determined opponents cannot resist the pathos of such a tragedy. But the place itself is no longer in keeping with associations so dreary. A lively, fashionable little watering-place has sprung up with mushroom swiftness. At the station you are beset by clamouring rivals of the big new hotels now grouped around the shore; villas and cottage *ornés* keep them company; a casino is not wanting; for two or three months in the year Quiberon has become a miniature Etretat!

October is at hand, and visitors are returning home, in spite of the glorious weather. On this 24th of September a brilliant sun shines in a cloudless sky, the temperature is that of July; nothing can be more delightful than this delicious little bay with its smooth sands. We have everything to ourselves. The villas are shut up; in a few days, one hotel after the other will follow suit, and the new Quiberon become inanimate as the old.

There can, however, be no doubt as to its

future. A mere name in guidebooks of twenty years ago, this rapidly-rising watering-place is too attractive not to become cosmopolitan. Sanitation and enforcement of cleanliness in the public ways are the necessary conditions of such development. The cholera epidemics of 1892 and 1893 will surely lead local authorities throughout Brittany to take precautionary measures. My only astonishment is that such outbreaks have not been twice as widespread and twice as violent. Not only here, but throughout France, sanitation is the last reform thought of. Cities are beautified, abuses swept away, enormous strides made in other directions.

Some survivals, on the contrary, are welcome enough. After twenty years I found hotel charges the same at Auray. Nor have education and intercourse with the outer world detracted from the unsophisticated character of the people. The fête of a patronal saint occurred during my stay. Well-dressed peasant folk, here retaining the sober costume of former days, flocked by hundreds into the town. There was no noise or drunkenness, but until a late hour could be heard men's and boy's voices singing a low monotonous chant. I was still in Brittany, although no longer the Brittany of former days!



## PART V

PROVINCES: MAINE, TOURAINE, BEAUCE





# I

DEPARTMENTS : SARTHE, INDRE AND LOIRE,  
LOIR AND CHER, EURE AND LOIR

IN order to make this round of travel complete, I now take the traveller rapidly to Paris by way of Le Mans and Chartres, diverging in order to glance at Touraine.

The first view of the modern-looking capital of the Maine, now *chef-lieu* of the Sarthe, spreading from either side of the cathedral, is majestic, far more so the after approach to the minster itself. A long street winds upward to a broad, open space, above which the glorious apse, with stupendous flying buttresses, rises like a mountain ; surrounding the gray walls are shrubberies and neatly laid-out pleasure grounds. The cathedral stands isolated as a palace from the town. Nothing throughout France more imposing than the back view of lofty choir, apsidal chapels, and light yet enormous buttresses. On the other side, opposite the front portal, rises a grand old

mediæval house to keep it company, a stately pile, with tall, slated roofs, pointed turrets and dormers, now, alas! let out to humble occupants in flats. From the beautiful, albeit, rather cold nave, to gorgeous choir, is a transition wholly indescribable. So vast the interior that we seem to pass from cathedral to cathedral, the one of pure, unadorned classic beauty, the other, a dazzling scene, richest jewelled light veiling soft gray masonry.

In this enormous labyrinthine interior—the choir is as large as the remainder of the building—we may profitably spend hours, now before one chapel, now another, each revealing the perfection of the glass-stainer's art.

Le Mans, like most others in France, is fast undergoing modernisation. Its picturesque old mills by the Sarthe have disappeared all but one. From the outer side of the river we gain a beautiful view of cathedral and town, so soon destined to lose every vestige of antiquity. A charming walk has been laid out by the banks, planted with flowers and trees, the huts of the washerwomen and the blue-bloused fishermen below lending a touch of the picturesque. From the crystal clear water we see these anglers haul up their quaint three-cornered nets—a subject for an artist.

Of its many sights, the Botanic Gardens are the glory of Le Mans. The hot sun brings out

all the richness of blossom, the result dazzling the eye. Such a blaze of colour we rarely see at home in August; roses, china-asters, zinnias, amaranths, begonias, every flower in season being massed together in enormous beds,—from end to end the air saturated with perfume. These municipal pleasure grounds do the town great honour. Besides brilliant and perfectly kept parterres are English gardens or rockeries, fruit and vegetable sections, basins of carp greedily asking a crumb from the stranger, with aviaries, goats, sheep, and other animals of rare breed. On Thursdays, when a military band plays, the place is alive with delighted spectators. The entire population seems to turn out, rich and poor, old and young revelling in the flowers and the music. We must live in France to realise this capacity for enjoyment and its value as a moral factor. Such a reflection will occur to any one turning from the animated crowds of the Botanic Garden to the monument in the principal square.

Here, on an arctic night of December 1870, General Chanzy made a desperate stand against the Prussians, his brave army outnumbered by two to one. Between four and five thousand French soldiers, most of them young recruits, were killed or wounded, and over twelve thousand taken prisoners—one crushing disaster out of many.

But for this good gift of natural, spontaneous gaiety and hopefulness, what would the condition of France have been now?

Le Mans, as the map shows us, occupies a most important commercial and strategic position. Five great lines of railway converge here. A Lycée, or public day-school for girls and training school for female teachers have been opened at Le Mans of late years, besides many other institutions of public utility. The art of glass-staining has long been a speciality of this town. Alike from an industrial and agricultural point of view, recent progress in the Sarthe has been very rapid.

Just as five o'clock tea,—the word as well as the thing have been introduced into French homes and French dictionaries,—drainage has received alike linguistic and practical adoption.<sup>1</sup> *Le drainage*, agriculturists and statisticians tell us, combined with the use of artificial manures and increased facilities of communication, have here raised agricultural returns of late years from ten to three hundred per cent.

A rich, beautiful, and fruitful country is passed between Le Mans and Tours. The landscape is quite unlike that of Normandy or Brittany, brighter, sunnier, more animated. Normandy has something of the Breton characteristic, it is not sombre but subdued, and shows great sameness.

<sup>1</sup> Drain ; Anglais, Drainage, Drainer. See Littré.

On entering Touraine either from the Calvados or the Sarthe, we find ourselves in a warmer zone, under a more dazzling sky. An admirable handbook for the traveller in Touraine, is Balzac's *Lys dans la Vallée*. In his peculiarly elaborate, circumlocutory fashion, mingled with a passionate love of native country, he therein describes the châteaux peeping amid rich woods, their windows shining like polished diamonds, his favourite river the Indre with its green islets, willowy banks and umbrageous reaches, the wild-flowers, the vintage, "those last lovely days of autumn whose memory inspired Rabelais, imparting a Bacchic tone to his great work."

Tours and its position on the Loire need no description. Its picturesque cathedral, looked at askance by the purist in architecture, will ever remain a favourite with the uncritical. Under the glowing heaven the richly-sculptured façade and many-tier'd towers rise with splendid effect. We seem to behold a structure hewn out of virgin gold under a dome of amethyst. Colour no less than form should surely enter into our appreciation of architecture.

In another part of the town are monuments of three great Tourangeaus in need of none—Descartes who taught his contemporaries to think; Rabelais who taught them to doubt; Balzac who lifted for all time the veil from the human heart.

A hot, dusty, suburban road leads to Plessis-lès-Tours, a modern construction built on the plan of Louis XI.'s favourite resort ; the wide pleasance in which his saturnine nature delighted being now cultivated as a market garden.

Around vestiges of tyranny and barbarism, damp, airless, windowless cells and cavities, grow in wild luxuriance, tomatoes, vines, melons, flowers. Here then formerly stood "that sombre, fortified manor, its walls bristling with iron spikes, its fosses filled with mantraps, its armed sentinels keeping guard night and day,—lugubrious shadow cast over the pleasant, pleasure-loving Touraine." In the environs, writes another chronicler, were to be seen nothing but bodies swinging from trees, tortured victims of the king's comrade Tristan l'Ermite, whilst the shrieks of the living issued from dark torture chambers.

It was at Plessis-lès-Tours that Louis XI. learned the best news of his life, namely, the death of his arch-enemy, Charles the Bold ; it was here that he died, causing even greater joy to his kingdom, and leaving the reins of government in the hands of a girl, his daughter Anne, the least foolish of her sex, he called her, adding, after his own cynical fashion, "for wise women there are none." Anne of France inherited her father's statecraft, but we do not learn that she possessed also the caustic wit of the terrible

old king,—a wit at times making us forget his crimes.

It was instructive to watch the artisans, soldiers, and peasant folk in the Tours museum on Sunday afternoon. Every object interested,—prehistoric remains, natural history, and geological collections, casts from the antique, pictures old and new. We cannot be too often reminded that these local museums and the opportunities thus afforded all classes of visiting them, tell immensely on French art and manufactures. The handicraftsman has received an artistic training before being called upon to exercise his trade. Yet these cultivated working-people are content to remain what they were. The majority of the women at Tours still adhere to the neat white muslin head-dress of their granddames, their entire dress being plain, appropriate, and serviceable.

Amboise and Chenonceaux, so grandly placed on the Loire, may be visited by road or rail from Tours in a day. The great beauty of both has never been exaggerated.

• At Amboise we are reminded of the efflorescence of French art that followed the Italian campaigns of Charles VIII. and François I. It was, above all, the last-mentioned king who turned France into a second Italy. To the dazzling monarch of the Renaissance, artists were kith and



kin, brethren of the soul. It was he who persuaded the veteran Leonardo da Vinci to quit his native country, loading him with honours, calling him by the endearing name of father; in the arms of François, the glorious old man died, "asking pardon of God and man for not having achieved for his art all that lay in his power."

Sculptors, artists, and decorators turned this stronghold of Louis XI. into a veritable palace of art. Amboise was defaced by the first Napoleon and confiscated by the Third: one hardly knows which was the more ignoble deed. Its present owner, the Comte de Paris, to whom it was magnanimously restored by the Republic, some years since set on foot complete restoration on the old model. These works remain in abeyance, and the vast straggling interior presents a chaotic appearance. Fortunately the château has not been handed over to the Vandals, is still itself, none more imposing, more captivatingly placed in this wonderful region. We seem to have reached a land of enchantment, château after château, each more beautiful than the last, springing from the ground at the touch of unseen wand.

Appalling associations cling to every one. Nothing indeed more strikes us on this tour than the juxtaposition of luxury and crime, refinement and savagery as revealed by history and our own eyes. At Plessis-lès-Tours, Amboise, Blois,

Loches, the great lesson taught by Schiller is enforced. The love of the beautiful does not of itself incite to virtue. The æsthetic education of mankind only leaves the moral nature free to choose between good and evil.

Especially bloodstained are the annals of Amboise. Let the traveller take note of an iron balcony overlooking the courtyard. There took place before François II. and his court a wholesale massacre of Huguenot gentlemen,—precursor of St. Bartholomew,—the most distinguished victims being reserved for the evening, *pour donner quelque passe-temps aux dames*, in order to amuse the ladies. Among the spectators was Mary Stuart, who, it is related, showed no horror at the butchery. Later on we visit the spot where meet retribution overtook the Duke and Cardinal de Guise, Marat and Robespierre of a Terror far more horrible than that of the Revolution !

From Amboise to Chenonceaux is a pleasant drive through richly-cultivated levels, the green and purple-leaved vines in brilliant contrast. It was fair-time,—September is the month of fairs,—and on our way we met tidy, well-to-do couples trudging to the town on foot or driving a donkey cart, their clothes always of the kind that will wear well, no finery or show. Chenonceaux is a Venetian-like palace rising from fairy waters. Fairy-like, at least romantic, should be the

presiding spirit here. A few years ago, this exquisite place, prototype of the beautiful palace of Chantilly, fell into the hands of the Philistine. Nothing could mar its matchless site, nothing could exceed the Inquisitorial ingenuity which has vulgarised the interior,—gem of the Renaissance turned into a gaudy drinking pavilion ! Here, as at Amboise, the views of the river defy description. From little corner rooms, boudoirs of Valois queens and favourites, we gaze on scenes unsurpassed throughout France, the transparent pearly waters giving double and yet fairer pictures,—palace, terraced garden, stately avenue, and river banks, all imaged silvery bright in the placid Cher.

The memories of Chenonceaux are far from exhilarating. As at Amboise, Loches, and Blois, we are reminded of some legendary beauty condemned to grim enchantment, enslaved by fell musician. This pleasure-house amid fairy waters was the abode of Diane de Poitiers, whose frailty proved as fatal to liberty of conscience as did Madame de Maintenon's sanctimoniousness a century later.

One of the most scathing rebukes ever administered to vice is recorded of a poor Huguenot tailor. By order of "the beauty who never grew old," he was summoned before her lover, the infamous Henri III., and the Cardinal

de Guise, much merriment being anticipated from his cross-questioning. Diane de Poitiers put in a word, whereupon the prisoner exclaimed, with great coolness and dignity, "Madame, rest satisfied with having polluted France. Do not seek to contaminate God's holy truth." The bold speaker was roasted alive with two fellow Protestants in the Rue St. Antoine. When he observed Henri III. at a window opposite, he fixed his eye upon him with a look so piercing that the king rushed away horror-stricken.

We hardly quit the railway station at Blois ere we come upon the enormous façade of the château, towering loftily over town and suburb. It is quite unlike any other in France. The vast, uniform, many-windowed exterior, wears rather the aspect of a wide-stretching rock, carved, caverned in every part, than of mere masonry on a gigantic scale. Strange how some crimes retain their hold on the imagination, centuries after their committal! Deeds of cowardice, tyranny, and bloodshed were common enough during the historic period of Blois, none so notorious as the assassination of the Duke of Guise. The instigator of St. Bartholomew, the assassin of Coligny, the soul of the League, the bold rival of the poltroon Henri III., had received due warning. On the eve of the murder a folded paper hinting the king's design tumbled from his dinner napkin.

"He dare not do it" cried the Duke flinging the missive under the table.

With feelings of horror we follow every detail of the bloody deed, realising on the spot how the victim, himself steeped in butchery, was trapped like a wild beast, unarmed, defending himself against the daggers of forty hired murderers, to the last fighting like a wounded lion.

Like many another villain the Duke possessed a fascinating presence. It was a byword at the time that "even Huguenots belonged to the League when in presence of M. de Guise." "The great homicide," as his assassination was called, produced a veritable panic in Paris. Shops were closed, crowds collected in the streets, people wept as for a national calamity. And the hero thus mourned was he who, sixteen years before, had awaited the assassination of Coligny, impatiently as Henri III. awaited his own. The watchword of St. Bartholomew, "Death or abjuration," was avenged in the guardroom of Blois.

Lurid indeed is the light thrown upon history in this most picturesque, most engaging town! How hostile was public feeling to liberty of conscience may be gathered from one fact. On the assemblage of the États de Blois a few years before the Duke's assassination, nobility, clergy, and third estate, the latter composed as in 1789 of representatives of the people, with hardly a

dissentient voice petitioned for religious unity, in other words the enforcement of Catholicism under penalty of imprisonment, banishment, death.

We forget these sombre associations as we linger in the noble gardens of the Bishop's palace, overlooking the bright Loire, riverside suburbs and gray-roofed town. So closely connected, however, are these châteaux with the history of France, so paramount their historic interest, that it seems inappropriate to describe them from any other point of view. They group themselves in the mind just as certain natural features, mountains, lakes or rivers placed in juxtaposition. One must be taken with the other, and all are linked together by kindred claims. Loches, within an equally easy reach of Tours, is a clean, sleepy, genteel-looking little place, with pretty modern villas, peeping amid gardens and wide deserted streets. The huge enceinte of the castle overshadows the town, which is seen to best advantage from the Chateauroux side of the railway. Approached this way, Loches shows a charmingly picturesque and magnificent front, the sunny palace raised for Agnes Sorel standing wide apart from the grim donjons.

More interesting than the home "of the lady of beauty" is her tomb in the chapel adjoining. Strangely contrasted is the sweetness, artlessness, and grace of this monument with the sombre,

frowning, many - dungeoned fortress opposite. The recumbent figure of the good genius of Charles VII. is in keeping with her legend. Very dainty, lovely, and pathetic looks Agnes Sorel as she lies here, perpetuated by the sculptor's art. She reposes in soft, childlike slumber, her small hands folded in prayer ; her delicate features composed ; on each side, a child angel, fair and tender as herself keeping watch ; at her feet, two lambs, charmingly posed. The " lady of beauty " was no persecutor, her influence over her contemptible lover, betrayer of Jeanne d'Arc and Jacques Cœur, was uniformly beneficent. She compassionated the sufferings of the people, and for many years maintained a modest, retiring attitude. Her worst offences seems to have been hauteur and display, and the invention of the *robe décolletée*. In the same building are seen memorials of a very different woman, the cold, self-seeking, ambitious Anne of Brittany, " twice Queen of France, never a Frenchwoman at heart."

From the palace and oratory a long winding lane leads to the donjon. We pass green, open spaces with goats and poultry feeding, women washing their clothes, children at play, the gaunt grim walls over against us.

A mite of a girl bearing a paraffin lamp lights us down the dark staircases leading to two storeys of subterranean dungeons, the first, a

degree less horrible than the lower. In one cell of the upper storey are seen two sets of holes, indentures hewn out of the wall by the wretched prisoners anxious to get near the small aperture admitting air and light.

There, then, digging into the brickwork with fingers and toes, enduring cramp and numbness, most likely braving additional punishment, they would hang like flies to the wall, frantically clutching a breath of air and sight of the heavens. The oubliettes lower down are mere pits, without any kind of ventilation or window. The charming chronicler, Philippe de Comines, Ludovic Sforza, and how many other harmless men, have clung like flies to that horrible wall, breathed the stagnant air of these infernal prisons !

Apart from its grim souvenirs, Loches is a bright little place. Existence might prove monotonous here. A summer holiday were delightful.

Whether we reach Chartres by way of Caen or Le Mans, we are thus afforded a gradually ascending scale of architectural splendour, the cathedral of the former town forming the climax.

Glorious as is autumn in Touraine, September has drawbacks for the quiet-loving traveller. Fairs, and regiments returning from the manœuvres, transform every town into a Babel. Chartres proved no exception to the rule. What with the



encampments of cavalry and the fair, I found quiet wholly out of the question, and a decent room only to be had with difficulty. The cathedral made up for everything. Its exquisitely graceful spires, shooting up into the heavens, audaciously, magically as the Eiffel Tower,—to compare achievements only in one respect, comparable,—rise high above the town. You climb guided by the eye. Here, as with the exquisite cathedral of Mende in the Lozère, one spire is a marvel of lavish decoration, whilst the other is severely simple and unadorned. Perhaps this inequality but serves to enhance the general effect. In any case, no element of beauty seems wanting. Massiveness and harmony can attain no greater perfection. The cathedral of Chartres must be considered under a threefold aspect: first, there is the exterior, an artistic world in itself; next, the interior; thirdly, the subterranean church, one of the wonders of French ecclesiastical architecture. This underground church is quite complete, and in several of the chapels mass is performed. The shrine of the Virgin has been for ages a favourite pilgrimage, and still remains so. Here also fresh flowers constantly shed fragrance, and worshippers may be seen at all hours of the day. The cathedral itself is a scene of beauty, to be revisited again and again. Instead of the five vast naves of Bourges, we have transepts with

grand rose-windows, those of the clerestory, as of the former, composed entirely of rich old stained glass. The choir possesses much of the airy loveliness of Le Mans; and the interior, as a whole, is lighter, less majestically sombre than that of Bourges. Yet all the gorgeousness dazzling us at the former place is repeated, always excepting the prevailing rose-tints. Here, again, we are grateful for the unblemished condition of the church; no vulgar tinsel, no crude decoration as an eyesore. A second Ruskin should write a book called *The New Testament at Chartres*, companion volume to the *Bible at Amiens*. What one artist has accomplished for Bible story, others have done for Gospel narrative. If less perfect in detail than the highly-finished wood-carvings of Amiens, these bas-reliefs in stone adorning the choir of Chartres are more pathetic and lifelike. We have before our own eyes the entire history of Jesus of Nazareth and the Virgin written in stone, and with genuine fervour and poetic feeling. Each group is living, the animation and expression no less striking than the individuality and variety of the figures composing it. Throughout the entire series the face of the Saviour is the same—one of wondrous sweetness and sanctity. Many of the female figures are very beautiful. Although this part of the building is dusky, the sculptures stand out in bold relief.

Behind the choir, the stained glass of the apsidal chapels emits rich, jewel-like light.

The exterior must be seen again and again. Its richly-sculptured portals, elegant lancet windows, flying buttresses, and delicate pinnacles are more easily taken account of than the stupendous height and proportions. To understand these we must visit the museum of comparative sculpture recently opened in Paris at the Trocadéro. There may be seen casts of the colossal statues adorning the façade and portal, their dimensions helping us to grasp those of the edifice itself.

Here took place the consecration of Henri IV., the gay Gascon, who smiled one moment and wept the next at his own apostasy. Paris is well worth a mass, was a jest flung to the world. The light-hearted king, nevertheless, shed bitter tears as he abjured the faith of his fathers.

In spite of the inevitable bustle and confusion attending a fair, and the influx of cavalry, nothing could surpass the orderliness of Chartres at the time I speak of. It was instructive to see party after party of young soldiers and raw conscripts trooping into the cathedral, some bent on visiting the crypt, others on ascending the tower, all minutely inspecting the interior. In the sacristy, too, many were purchasing souvenirs for dear ones at home, rosaries, photographs, and

medallions. A few, the number was very small, knelt and crossed themselves before the altar of the Virgin.

Pleasant, open boulevards contrast strikingly with the old town of Chartres. Far away from the railway station, built in terraces below the cathedral, lay the mediæval town, a fine old double-towered gateway, an ancient church or two, and some bits of quaint domestic architecture remaining. High above the little river Eure, a mere stream not of the clearest, old houses are picturesquely grouped ; they climb, as it were, on each other's shoulders, their hanging gardens and flower-filled balconies brightening the picture. Chartres has, of course, its monuments, no less than two commemorating her son, Marceau, general, victor, martyr, at the age of twenty-seven. The museum is highly creditable to the town, but much too crowded. Chartres suffered so severely during the Prussian occupation that the effects are still felt. Fortunately, it escaped the fate of its neighbour, heroic little Châteaudun, having been neither fired nor pillaged ; but the enormous exactions have sadly crippled the resources of the municipality ever since. It is on this account that no suitable building has as yet been erected for its art collections. Many treasures are stowed away from sheer want of space.

Here, too, were soldiers, anxious to see all they

could, utilising their visit to the utmost. Nothing could exceed the good behaviour of the vast military population suddenly turned loose upon this small Cathedral city. No one pays the slightest attention to strangers. Beggars, there are none, except the usual hangers-on of the churches. All inquiries are answered with the greatest affability.

A tourist who should diverge from the great Paris line at Amiens, thence by way of Rouen, Falaise, Caen, and Le Mans, make the loop or triangle including Amboise, Blois, Chenonceaux, Tours, Bourges, and Chartres, would have gained an anticipatory appreciation of France itself. If such is the portico what must be the temple? Separated but by a few hours, often lying nearer still, are cities, châteaux, and churches, which for beauty and historic interest are unrivalled in Europe, considered as a group have no parallel. The little journey may be called an education.

## PART VI

PROVINCES : PROVENCE, COMTÉ DE NICE



## I

### DEPARTMENTS: RHÔNE, VAUCLUSE

THE descent of the Rhône from Lyons to Avignon occupies twelve hours, and it would perhaps take as many years to master its history thoroughly from earliest times until now. Such a task has been attempted, and, in spite of his modest disclaimer, achieved by a learned Frenchman of our own day.

Few readers will find time for a careful perusal of M. Lenthéric's monumental work,<sup>1</sup> fewer travellers certainly will devote a long day to the journey got over by express train in four hours. But in both cases the more patient will be rewarded. The Rhône valley has well been called the highway of Europe, the historic road of nations. Every stage of the way recalls splendid civilisation long superseded, and at the same time gives us magnificent scenery.

We are at once struck with the swiftness of

<sup>1</sup> *Le Rhône*, par C. Lenthéric. Paris 1892.



this vast torrent, thus it has been described. Whilst the Saône is the most navigable stream imaginable, the very name of the Rhône, Celtic name dating from the beginnings of recorded history, stands for the impetuous, the swift rushing ; so at least say the learned.

The sense of swiftness is indescribable. We seem to be borne along faster than by railway. In spite of this extreme rapidity and the consequent difficulties of navigation, the solitude that now astonishes us belongs to our own epoch. Half a century ago sixty-two steamers plied between the riverside towns. The iron road on either bank has reduced the number to three, the return journey being generally made by rail. We may yet, however, behold the Rhône as animated as the popular and delightful Rhine. The future of this great river offers interest absorbing as its past.

Until the year 1860, authorities had been principally occupied with precautions against inundation ; as a channel of transport the Rhône being neglected. The competition of the railway suddenly reducing the tonnage between Lyons and Arles by more than half, aroused dormant interests. Projects put forward and laid aside long before, were now reconsidered, one after the other. In 1878 the formidable task of deepening the channel and regulating the currents was

begun in earnest. The system followed was that successfully carried out by German engineers in the Rhine and Elbe. I must refer the readers to M. Lenthérie's work for a description of this method, known as *Grundschiellen*. We are here concerned with the results. The success of the scheme has more than answered expectation. Not only has tonnage tripled, but navigation, formerly interrupted for months at a time, can now be carried on throughout the year. The artificially-induced flow of water renders alike steamer and barge independent of seasons.

If startling these achievements of the engineer, no less so are the triumphs of agricultural chemistry. Twenty years ago the vineyards of the Rhône valley were all but destroyed by the phylloxera. By the persistent use of sulphates and the recourse to American stocks, not only has ruin been averted, but former prosperity gradually restored. At the present time vintagers realise the maximum profit per hectare, reward of uncompromising sacrifice and toil. Alike the creation of a vineyard and the treatment of diseased vines by chemical methods are costly, the former necessitating an outlay of two thousand francs per hectare, so much capital sunk for five years, the latter, five hundred francs per hectare.<sup>1</sup> Yet the work has been done.

<sup>1</sup> See Note 19 to Vol. I. of this work.

But science has probably in store for the Rhône a future compared with which such results as these will sink into insignificance. Half a century ago, a French engineer, Dumont, matured a scheme for utilising this mighty torrent—offspring of a hundred and sixty glaciers—as a vast agent of irrigation. He saw with the mind's eye arid plains transformed into a second Lombardy or Valentia, parched-up slopes become orchard and garden.

These dreams, chimerical as they might appear to the non-scientific, were listened to, twenty years later the project weighed, even sanctioned by the Chamber. No practical results followed; and meantime engineer after engineer has endeavoured to solve the problem after his own fashion. Such an enterprise needed no apologist. The irrigation of the Rhône valley would prove a source of wealth wholly incalculable. But the outlay, reckoned by hundreds of millions, for the time being keeps the matter in abeyance. In the words of M. Lenthérie, "Such colossal undertakings are for an age of prolonged peace. European nations do not live after brotherly fashion; our energy, our intelligence, our money, are for the most part absorbed in preparations for destruction. If ever we are cured of this mania, an immense field of activity, with an assurance of enormously increased wellbeing,

will lie before us. We may be dreaming. At least let us indulge in such a dream !” Who can say? The riverside landscapes that now greet the traveller as he journeys from Lyons to Avignon may belong entirely to the France of to-day, quite other scenery awaiting future generations. Just as fields of asparagus replace the salt marshes of Normandy, and vineyards now belt Aigues-Mortes with dazzling verdure, so the Rhône valley, as we approach the south, may lose its oriental aspect, no longer recalling a new Jerusalem or Damascus.

Be this as it may, the true, the legitimate route to Provence is this *chemin qui marche*, this waterway. We thus witness the gradual merging of zone into zone, the bursting of the bud into glorious flower. We quit cool, gray, foggy Lyons at sunrise, and having passed one majestic ruin after another, at noon reach the beautifully-placed Valence. As the afternoon wears on, Viviers is approached, its ancient towers and Romanesque cathedral conspicuous above the roofs ; its yellow ramparts tapestried with ivy, close to the water’s edge, verdant reaches and little bits of wood ; far away, the glittering, snow-crowned Mont Ventoux. A little farther, on the slopes above Donzère, for the first time we see the olive. Here, then, Southern France may be said to begin ; and in one respect the scene before us is what it was in

ancient times. Then, as now, the immortal<sup>1</sup> olive marked a climatic boundary. Then, as now, the olive and the vine were the principal products of the Rhône valley.

At Donzère we were on the threshold of the South. At Pont St. Esprit we are, indeed, in Provence. The town, with its wonderful old bridge, now, alas! sacrificed to the interests of utility, makes a beautiful picture. It stands close to the water's edge, the houses grouped lovingly around the venerable church with lofty spire.

A golden softness of sky, a delicious languor in the air, proclaim the south. Cypressess and mulberry trees announce the approach to Avignon, experience to be set in the traveller's mind, beside the first glimpse of Venice from the Adriatic, or of Athens from the Piræus.

The Papal city should be visited in summer, otherwise we miss its oriental aspect. Yellow walls, burning blue heavens, venerable fig trees, white with fine, silvery dust, peach and olive orchards, recall the east.

The French peasant had need be thrifty, I was going to say sordid. Not a region but can speak of some special scourge; and, strange to say, chemical science, saviour of the Gard, has proved

<sup>1</sup> "The olive tree is of so great longevity that some plantations in Italy, as at Terni, are supposed to have existed from Pliny's time."—Loudon's *Encyclopædia of Plants*.

a ruin in the Vaucluse! So, at least, aver the country people, their principal product, madder, having been superseded by the discovery of aniline, or coal-tar dyes. It was in 1766 that Althen, a Persian, introduced the madder root into France; nearly a century later, one of our own countrymen discovered its rival. Formerly, the small owner of these regions regarded madder as the harvest of the year. If other crops failed, this made up for everything. As a peasant said to me, "The madder paid our way alike in good seasons and bad. We just manage to live nowadays, but when madder was cultivated, it was our own fault if we did not lay by."

Since 1860 the culture of this plant in Vaucluse has dwindled from 13,500 to 8 hectares! The vineyards have also greatly suffered of late years from the phylloxera. Even the silkworm industry was at one time imperilled. But the peasant owner ploughs up his madder field, replants his vineyard, and meantime lives by means of makeshift crops and industries. Here we find no evidence either of wealth or poverty. As we drive to Petrarch's valley, little farmhouses are seen on either side, their mellow walls gleaming against the deep blue sky, around fig trees and peach orchards. We are struck by the beauty of the bareheaded, dignified peasant girls; rich complexion, faultless features, dark hair and eyes, and

good carriage seem the portion of all. The conditions of life must be wholesome in a region where ill-favoured, poor physiques are exceptional.

Already in Arthur Young's time the tract between Avignon and Vaucluse had been rendered fertile by irrigation. The Sorgue, or Sorgues, it is also named in the plural, formerly branched out in all directions, making little islets, inhabited by veritable lake-dwellers, fishermen having wretched huts on piles. Canals now intersect the country, turning mills, and rendering the country very fertile. Truth to tell, devotees at the shrine of Petrarch and Laura are doomed to disenchantment. The rock-hemmed valley dedicated to their romantic love has lost much of its poetic halo. The stream flows crystal clear as of old, but the solitude around has been unwelcomely invaded. Whirr of mill-wheels and clatter of washerwomen beating clothes, mingle with the shrill cries of itinerant vendors of so-called relics. Crowds of tourists naturally encourage these hawkers, many of them young children, who pursue you with merciless insistence.

It might seem that the last word had been said about Petrarch's valley, but no. The fountain consecrated to ideal love may quite probably, at some future period, attain world-wide renown of quite another kind.

I have elsewhere mentioned the *avens* or caves and underground lakes and river of the Causses. In the words of their explorer, "Every mountain top has now been explored. An Alpinist in the present day finds himself in the field thirty years too late." But there yet remain the fascinations of subterranean adventure, now designated by a scientific name, *Höhlenkunde* in German, *Grottologie* in French.

In the opinion of authorities the Sorgues hides marvels to be set beside the underground grottoes and river of Adelsberg in Karniola, destined indeed to reward its discoverers with undreamed-of wonders.

In 1878 an undaunted diver, a workman, plunged into the fountain, reaching a depth of seventy and odd feet below the surface. Progress at that point was arrested by the narrowing of the aperture. He succeeded in sounding a further depth of twenty-six feet. "What," asks M. Lenthérie, "is the disposition of a subterranean reservoir, we may set down as covering a superficies of three thousand hectares, how is such a body of water apportioned? Does it take the form of rivers, lakes, rapids, cascades? Does the stream bifurcate, forced into different channels by obstructing rock? What is the number, the form, the size of these underground water-courses? What is the height of the caverns around? what



are the conditions of animal and vegetable life, the flora and fauna of this nether world?"

Whenever these questions are answered Petrarch's valley will be given up to hydraulic lifts, underground tramways, illuminations by magnesian light, German bands, monster hotels, and who can doubt it?—the poet and his Egeria will be clean forgotten. The tourist of to-day is doomed to no such disenchantment. Science has not yet wholly supplanted the Vaucluse of romance.

Mont Ventoux, outpost of the Alps, recalls another but less anti-poetic modern phase. This superb peak has one foot in the Boreal regions, one in the balmy south. On its northern side the fir flourishes as in Norway; on the opposite, the vine and the olive announce Provence.

As a meteorological station Mont Ventoux is expected to afford important results. The handsome observatory now crowning its summit was completed in 1887, and is approached by an excellent carriage road. On the other side of the Rhône another observatory is being constructed, I allude to that of the Aigoual (Lozère), one of the loftiest summits of the Cévennes. These two meteorological stations may be said to stand face to face. I may here mention that the great observatories crowning the Puy de Dôme, and the Pic du Midi in the Pyrenees have both

been inaugurated since the establishment of the Third Republic, the former in 1876, the latter in 1882.

A writer following in my footsteps half a century hence, will find enormous physical changes from the France of To-day. The Vandalism of former generations is being gradually repaired, atmospheric and climatic conditions modified by the replanting of forests. Already the base of the superb Mont Ventoux is one vast plantation; thousands of hectares have been planted on the southern slope with ilex, oak, beech; on the northern, with pine, fir, and cedar. No less abundant the harvests of the mountain than those of the plain and the sea! Timber and firewood will ere long increase the revenues of honey, aromatic plants, and truffles. The last mentioned is, indeed, the most precious product of this apparently barren peak. The *Lycoperdon bovista*, curiously enough, attains perfection under the ilex, and is now cultivated in the neighbourhood of these trees. Unlike the vine, the truffle, whilst one of the most remunerative, is one of the least costly crops. A single hectare will produce fifty kilos, and a net profit of five hundred francs. From this region truffles—hunted by trained dogs, the *chien barbet*—are exported to the value of several million francs; and, like the honey, under a borrowed name. The truffles of Mont Ventoux

are known in the market as *truffles de Périgord*, and the honey as *miel de Narbonne*.

A word about the mistral, that perpetual hot, driving wind, which is the traveller's first welcome to Provence. Authorities now assure us that this sirocco-like wind is a blessing in disguise, purifying the air, sweeping away germs of disease, doing, indeed, the work of sanitation. Of equal benefit I should say are the awful thunderstorms, also the traveller's welcome to Provence. Accompanied by deluging rain, these storms last for hours, the thunder roaring like artillery, the heavens blue with incessant lightning.

I remember such a storm at Avignon. It began early in the morning, accompanied us to Range, hovered about us there, returned with us at nightfall, the city blazing with steely, blinding coruscations. Next day the tropical heat—the month was August—was tempered, and the sirocco exchanged for a brisk wind.

But I can only fancy Orientals and Southerners happy "by the bridge of Avignon." We Northerners require more subdued light, a moister atmosphere, a more bracing climate,—at any rate till our days of intellectual work are past.

## II

### DEPARTMENTS : BOUCHES DU RHÔNE, ALPES MARITIMES

THE friendly visit of a few Russian naval officers lately put the country into as great a commotion as a hostile invasion. I started southward from Lyons on the 12th October amid scenes of wholly indescribable confusion ; railway stations a mere compact phalanx of excited tourists bound for Toulon, with no immediate prospect of getting an inch farther, railway officials at their wits' end, carriage after carriage hooked on to the already enormously long train, and yet crowds upon crowds left behind. Every train was, of course, late ; and on the heels of each followed supplementary ones, all packed to their utmost capacity. As we steamed into the different stations "Vive la Russie !" greeted our cars. The air seemed filled with the sound, never surely was such a delirium witnessed in France since the fever heat of 1789 !

At Valence, Montélimar, Avignon, Arles, the same tumult reigned ; but before reaching the second place, the regulation number of carriages, twenty-five, had been exceeded, and as hardly one per cent of the travellers alighted, we could only pass by the disconcerted multitudes awaiting places. And a mixed company was ours,—the fashionable world, select and otherwise, the demi-monde in silks and in tatters, musicians, travelling companies of actors and showmen, decorated functionaries, children, poodles, all bound for the Russian fleet !

At Marseilles, a bitter disappointment awaited some, I fear, many. No sooner were we fairly within the brilliantly - lighted, crowded station, and before the train had come to a standstill, a stentorian voice was heard from one end of the platform to the other, crying—

“ LOOK TO YOUR PURSES ! ”

And as the gorged carriages slowly discharged their burden, the stream of passengers wending towards the door marked “ Way out,” a yet louder and more awe-inspiring voice came from above, the official being perched high as an orator in the pulpit, repeating the same words—

“ ATTENTION À VOTRE PORTE - MONNAIE ! ”

The dismay of the thwarted pickpockets may

be better imagined than described. Many, doubtless, had come from great distances, confident of a golden harvest. Let us hope that the authorities of Toulon were equally on the alert.

Marseilles no more resembles Lyons, Bordeaux, Nantes, than those cities resemble each other. Less elegant than Lyons, less majestic than Bordeaux, gayer by far than Nantes, the capital of Southern France has a stamp of its own. To-day, as three thousand years ago, Marseilles may be called the threshold of the East. In these hot, bustling, noisy streets, Paris is quiet by comparison; London a Trappist monastery! Orientals, or what our French neighbours call exotics, are so common that no one looks at them. Japanese and Chinese, Hindus, Tonquinois, Annamites, Moors, Arabs, all are here, and in native dress; and writing letters in the salon of your hotel, your *vis-à-vis* at the *table d'hôte*, your fellow sightseers, east and west, to-day as of old, here come into friendly contact; and side by side with the East is the glowing life of the South. We seem no longer in France but in a great cosmopolitan mart that belongs to the whole world.

The Marseillais, nevertheless, are French; and Marseilles to their thinking, is the veritable metropolis. "If Paris had but her Cannebière," they say, "she would be a little Marseilles!"

Superbly situated, magnificently endowed as to climate, the *chef-lieu* of the Bouches du Rhône, must be called a slatternly beauty ; whilst embellishing herself, putting on jewels and splendid attire, she has forgotten to wash her face and trim her hair ! Not in Horatian phrase, dainty in her neatness, Marseilles does herself injustice. Lyons is clean swept, spick and span as a toy-town ; Bordeaux is coquettish as her charming Bordelaise ; Nantes, certainly, is not particularly careful of appearances. But Marseilles is dirty, unswept, littered from end to end ; you might suppose that every householder had just moved, leaving their odds and ends in the streets, if indeed these beautifully-shaded walks can be so called. The city in its development has laid out alleys and boulevards instead of merely making ways, with the result that in spite of brilliant sky and burning sun, coolness and shadow are ever to be had. The Cannebière, with its blue sky, glowing foliage, and gay, nonchalant, heterogeneous crowds, reminds me of the Rambla of Barcelona. Indeed, the two cities have many points of resemblance. Marseilles is greatly changed from the Marseilles I visited twenty-five years ago, to say nothing of Arthur Young's description of 1789. The only advantage with which he accredited the city was that of possessing newspapers. Its port, he wrote, was a horsepond compared to that of Bordeaux ; the

number of country houses dotting the hills disappointingly small. At the present time, suburban Marseilles, like suburban London, encroaches year by year upon the country ; another generation and the sea-coast from Toulon to the Italian frontier will show one unbroken line of country houses. Of this no one can doubt who sees what is going on in the way of building.

But it is not only by beautiful villas and gardens that the city has embellished itself. What with the lavishness of the municipality, public companies, and the orthodox, noble public buildings, docks, warehouses, schools, churches, gardens, promenades, have rendered Marseilles the most sumptuous French capital after Paris. Neither Lyons, Bordeaux, Nantes, can compare with it for sumptuosity. In the Palais de Longchamps, the splendour of municipal decoration reaches its acme ; the horsepond Arthur Young sneered at now affords dock accommodation of 340 acres, with warehouses, said to be the finest in the world ; last, but not least, comes the enormous Byzantine Cathedral not yet finished, built at a cost of a quarter of a million sterling. Other new churches and public buildings without number have sprung up of late years, the crowning glory of Marseilles being its Palais de Longchamps.

This magnificent group of buildings may be called a much enlarged and much more grandiose



Trocadéro. Worthily do these colossal Tritons and sea-horses commemorate the great achievement of modern Marseilles, namely, the conveying of a river to its very doors. Hither, over a distance of fifty-four miles, are brought the abundant waters of the Durance ; as we stand near, their cascades falling with the thunder of our own Lodore. But having got the river and given the citizens more than enough water with which to turn their mills, supply their domestic wants, fertilise suburban fields and gardens, the Town Council seem satisfied. The streets are certainly, one and all, watered with rushing streams, greatly to the public health and comfort. A complete system of drainage is needed to render the work complete. When we learn that even Nice is not yet drained from end to end, we need not be astonished at tardy progress elsewhere. Sanitation is ever the last thing thought of by French authorities. Late in the afternoon we saw two or three men slowly sweeping one street. No regular cleaning seems to take place. Get well out of the city, by the sea-shore, or into the Prado—an avenue of splendid villas—and all is swept and garnished. The central thoroughfares, so glowing with life and colour, and so animated by day and night, are malodorous, littered, dirty. It is a delightful drive by the sea, over against the Château d'If, forts frowning above the rock, the deep blue waves,

yellowish-brown shore, and green foliage, all in striking contrast.

We with difficulty realise that Marseilles is not the second city in France. The reason is obvious. Lyons lies less compactly together, its thickly-peopled Guillotière seems a town apart; the population of Lyons, moreover, is a sedentary one, whilst the Marseillais, being seafarers, are perpetually abroad. The character too is quite different, less expansive, less excitable, less emotional in the great silk-weaving capital, here gay, noisy, nonchalant. Nobody seems to find the cares of the day a burden, all to have some of the sunshine of the place in their composition. "Mon bon," a Marseillais calls his neighbour; there is no stiffness anywhere. Everybody is "Mon bon" to everybody.

The out-of-door, rollicking, careless life, more especially strikes a northerner. We seem here as remote from ordinary surroundings as if suddenly transported to Benares. The commercial prosperity of the first French seaport is attested by its lavish public works and number of country houses, a disappointing handful in Arthur Young's time. Hardly a householder, however modest his means, who does not possess a cottage or *châlet*; the richer having palatial villas and gardens. Nothing can convey a greater notion of ease and wealth than the prospect of suburban

Marseilles, its green hills rising above the sea thickly dotted with summer houses in every part.

All who wish to realise the advance of French cities since 1870-71 should visit Marseilles. Only those who knew it long ago can measure the change, and greater changes still are necessary ere its sanitary conditions match climate and situation.<sup>1</sup>

From Marseilles to Nice, from the land of the olive to that of the palm, is a long and wearisome journey. That tyrannical monopoly, the Paris-Lyons-Méditerranée Railway Company, gives only slow trains, except to travellers provided with through tickets; and these so inconveniently arranged, that travellers unprovided with refreshments have no opportunity of procuring any on the way. Whenever we travel by railway in France we are reminded of the crying need for competition. The all-omnipotent P.-L.-M. does as it pleases, and it is quite useless for travellers to complain. Every inch of the way points to the future of the Riviera—a future not far off. A few years hence and the sea-coast from Marseilles to Mentone will be one unbroken line of hotels and villas. The process is proceeding at a rapid rate. When Arthur Young made this journey a century ago he described the country around Toulon thus: "Nine-tenths

<sup>1</sup> See Note 13, Liverpool and Marseilles.

are waste mountain, and a wretched country of pines, box, and miserable aromatics." At the present time, the brilliant red soil, emerald crops, and gold and purple leafage of stripped vine, make up a picture of wondrous fertility. At every point we see vineyards of recent creation ; whilst not an inch of soil between the olive trees is wasted. On the 28th of October the landscape was bright with autumn crops, some to be *répiqué*, or planted out according to the Chinese system before mentioned.

The first thing that strikes the stranger at Nice is its Italian population. These black-eyed, dark-complexioned, raven-haired, easy-going folks form as distinct a type as the fresh-complexioned, blue-eyed Alsatian. That the Niçois are French at heart is self-evident, and no wonder, when we compare their present condition with that of the past. We see no beggars or ragged, wretched-looking people. If the municipal authorities have set themselves the task of putting down mendicity, they have succeeded. French enterprise, French capital is enriching the population from one end of the Alpes Maritimes to the other. At the present time there must be tens of thousands of workmen employed in the building of hotels and villas between Marseilles and Ventimille. That the Riviera will finally be overbuilt no one can doubt ; much of the original beauty of the

country is already destroyed by this piling up of bricks and mortar, more beauty is doomed. But meantime work is brisk, wages are high, and the Post Office savings bank and private banks tell their own tale.

Of course the valetudinarians contribute to the general prosperity, a prosperity which it is difficult for residents in an English watering-place to realise. Thus I take up a Hastings newspaper to find a long list of lodging-house keepers summoned for non-payment of taxes. Arrived at Nice, a laundress employed by my hostess immediately came to see if I had any clothes for her. On bringing back the linen she deposited it in my room, saying I could pay her when fetching the next bundle. I let her go, but called her back, thinking that perhaps the poor woman had earned nothing for months and was in distress. My hostess afterwards informed me with a smile that this good woman had £2,500 in the bank. I could multiply instances in point.

If the condition of the working-classes has immensely improved, the cost of living has not stood still. A householder informed me that prices of provisions, servants' wages, house rent, and other items of domestic economy have tripled within the last twenty years. There is every prospect that this increase will continue. Last winter hotels and boarding-houses at Nice were

all full; fast as new ones are built, they fill to overflowing. And, of course, the majority of visitors are rich. No others should come; they are not wanted.

In studying the rural population we must bear in mind one fact, namely, the line of demarcation separating the well-to-do peasants of the plain from the poor and frugal mountaineer. Follow the mule track from Mentone to Castillon, and we find a condition of things for squalor and poverty unmatched throughout France. Visit an olive-grower in the valley of the Var, and we are once more amid normal conditions of peasant property. My first visit was to the land of Goshen.

Provided with a letter of introduction to a farmer, I set off for the village of St. Martin du Var, a village of five hundred and odd souls, only within the last year or two accessible by railway. The new line, which was to have connected Nice with Digne and Gap, has been stopped short half way, the enterprising little company who projected it being thereby brought to the verge of ruin. This fiasco, due, I am told, to the jealous interference of the P.-L.-M., is a great misfortune to travellers, the line, partially opened up, leading through a most wildly picturesque and lovely region, and being also of great commercial and strategic importance. But that terrible monopoly, the Paris-Lyons-Méditerranée, will tolerate no rivals.

Folks bound from Gap to Nice must still make the long round by way of Marseilles in order to please the Company ; merchandise,—and, in case of a war with Italy, which may Heaven avert !—soldiers and ammunition must do the same.

The pretty new “Gare du Sud” invites patronage, and three services are performed daily. On this little line exists no third class. I imagine, then, that either the very poor are too poor to take train at all, or that there are none unable to pay second-class fare. In company of priests, peasants, and soldiers, I took a second-class place, the guard joining us and comfortably reading a newspaper as soon as we were fairly off.

It is a superb little journey to St. Martin du Var. The line may be described as a succession of tunnels, our way lying between lofty limestone cliffs and the Var, at the present time almost dry. As we slowly advance the valley widens, and on either side are broad belts of verdure and fertility ; fields, orchards, gardens, olive trees feathering the lower slopes, here and there, little villages perched high above the valley. One charming feature of the landscape is the aspen ; so silvery were its upper leaves in the sun that at first I took them for snow-white blossoms. These verdant stretches on either side of the river were formerly mere waste, redeemed and rendered cultivable by means of dykes.

My destination is reached in an hour, a charmingly placed village amid beautiful mountain scenery, over against it towering the hamlet of La Roquette, apparently inaccessible as cloud-land. Here a tributary stream joins the Var, the long winding valley, surrounded by lofty crags and olive-clad slopes, affording a delightful and most exhilarating prospect. The weather on this 20th of October was that of a perfect day in July.

St. Martin du Var has its Mairie, handsome communal schools, and large public walks or recreation ground, a parallelogram planted with trees. The place has a neglected, Italian aspect ; at the same time an aspect of ease and contentment. The black-eyed, olive-complexioned, Italian-looking children are uniformly well dressed, with good shoes and stockings. French children, even of the poorest class, are always decently shod.

I found my host at dinner with his wife, little daughter, and sister-in-law. The first impression of an uninitiated traveller would be of poverty. The large bare kitchen was unswept and untidy ; the family dishes—soup, vegetables, olives, good white bread, wine—were placed on the table without cloth or table-cover. As will be seen, these hard-working, frugal people were rich ; in England they would have servants to wait upon them, fine furniture, and wear fashionable clothes. My letter



of introduction slowly read and digested, the head of the family placed himself at my disposal. We set off on a round of inspection, the burning mid-day sun here tempered by a delicious breeze.

We first visited the olive-presses and corn-mill,—this farmer was village miller as well as olive grower,—all worked by water-power and erected by himself at a heavy outlay. Formerly these presses and mills were worked by horses and mules after the manner of old-fashioned threshing-machines, but in Provence as in Brittany progress is now the order of the day.

In order to supply these mills, a little canal was dug at my host's own expense, and made to communicate with the waters of the Var ; thus a good supply is at hand.

The enormous olive presses and vats are now being got in for the first or October harvest. This is the harvest of windfalls or fallen fruit, green or black as the case may be, and used for making an inferior kind of oil. The second harvest or gathering of the olives remaining on the trees takes place in April. Linen is spread below and the berries gently shaken off. I may add that the periods of olive harvests vary in different regions, often being earlier or later. An olive tree produces on an average a net return of twelve francs, the best returns being alternate or biennial ; the roots are manured from time to

time, otherwise the culture is inexpensive. The trees are of great age, and indeed are seldom known to die. The "immortal olive" is indeed no fiction. In this especial district no olive trees have, within living memory, been killed by frost, as was the case in Spain some years ago. Nevertheless, the peaks around St. Martin du Var are tipped with snow in winter. The olive harvests and necessary preparations require a large number of hands, the daily wages of men averaging three francs, of women, the half. Thus at the time I write of, day labourers in remote regions of Provence receive just upon fourteen shillings and sixpence per week ; whereas I read in the English papers that Essex farmers are reducing the pittance of twelve and even ten shillings per week for able-bodied men.

Ten days later, my cicerone said that the first harvest would be in active process, and he most cordially invited me to revisit him for the purpose of looking on. From the lees of the crushed berries a third and much inferior oil is made and used in the manufacture of soap, just as what is called *piquette* or sour wine is made in Brittany from the lees of crushed grapes. I was assured by this farmer that the impurity of olive oil, we so often complain of in England, arises from adulteration at the hands of retailers. Table oil as it issues from the presses of the grower is

absolutely pure ; merchants add inferior qualities or poppy oil, described by me in an earlier page, and which my present host looked upon with supreme contempt. The olive, with the vine and tobacco, attains the maximum of agricultural profits. This farmer alone sells oil to the annual value of several thousand pounds, and to the smaller owner also it is the principal source of income. Peasant owners or tenants of an acre or two grow a little corn as well, this chiefly for their own use.

The interior of the corn-mill presented an amusing scene. Two or three peasants were squabbling with my host's subordinate over their sacks of flour ; one might have supposed from the commotion going on and the general air of vindictive remonstrance that we were suddenly transported to a seigneurial mill. A few conciliatory words from the master put all straight, and soon after we saw the good folks, one of them an old woman, trotting off on donkeys with their sack of corn slung before them. I need hardly say that the talk of these country people among themselves is always in patois, not a word of which is intelligible to the uninitiated.

Just above the mills are groves of magnificent old olive trees, and alongside the little railway were bright strips of lucerne and pasture, folks here and there getting in their tiny crops of hay.

The iron road is not yet regarded as an unmixed good. My host told me that local carters and carriers have been obliged in consequence to sell their horses and carts and betake themselves to day labour. Such drawbacks are, of course, inevitable, but the ulterior advantage effected by the railway is unquestionable. I should say that nowhere are life and property safer than in these mountain-hemmed valleys. The landlady of the little hotel at St. Martin du Var assured me that she always left her front door open all night. Nothing had ever happened to alarm her but the invasion of three English ladies at midnight, one of these of gigantic stature and armed with a huge stick. The trio were making a pedestrian journey across country, apparently taking this security for granted. Neither brigands nor burglars could have given the poor woman a greater fright than the untimely appearance of my countrywomen.

It was now too hot to visit the open tracts of pasture and cultivation alongside the Var. The farmer's wife proposed a shady walk to a neighbouring farm instead, our errand being to procure milk for my five o'clock tea. Without hat or umbrella, my companion set off, chatting as we went. She explained to me that on Sundays she wore bonnet and mantle after the fashion of a *bourgeoise*; in other words, she dressed like a

lady, but that neither in summer or winter at any other time did she cover her head. She was a pleasant - mannered, intelligent, affable woman, almost toothless as are so many well-to-do middle-aged folks in France. Dentists must fare badly throughout the country. No one ever seems to have a guinea to spend upon false teeth.

We were soon out of the village, and passing the pretty garden of the Gendarmerie, reached a scene of unimaginable, unforgettable beauty. Never shall I forget the splendour of the olive trees set around a wide, brilliantly green meadow ; near the farmhouse groves of pomegranate, orange, and lemon with ripening fruit ; beside these, medlar and hawthorn trees (*Crategus azarole*), the golden leaf-age and coral-red fruit of the latter having striking effect ; beyond, silvery peaks, and, above all, a heaven of warm, yet not too dazzling blue. At the farther end of the meadow, in which a solitary cow grazed at will, a labourer was preparing a ribbon-like strip of land for corn, beside him, pretending to work too, his little son of five years. My hostess held up her jug and stated her errand, proposing that the cow should be milked a trifle earlier in order to suit my convenience. The man good-naturedly replied that, as far as the matter concerned himself, he was agreeable enough, but that the cow was not so easily to be put out of her way. She was milked regularly as clockwork

at a quarter to five, the clock had only just struck four ; he might leave his work and take her home, but not a drop of milk would she give before the proper time ! Leaving our jug, we roamed about this little paradise, unwilling to quit a scene of unblemished beauty. A more bewitching spot I do not recall ; and it seemed entirely shut off from the world, on all sides, unbroken quiet, nothing to mar the exquisiteness of emerald turf, glossy foliage of orange and lemon trees, silvery olive in striking contrast, and above, a cloudless sky. In the heart of a primeval forest we could not feel more alone.

The thought occurred to me how perfect were such a holiday resort could a clean little lodging be found near ! With some attention to cleanliness and sanitation, the little hotel at St. Martin du Var might satisfy the unfastidious. I am bound to admit that in French phrase it leaves much to desire.

My hosts gave me a good deal of interesting information about the place and the people. Excellent communal schools with lay teachers of both sexes have been opened under French régime ; and the village of five hundred and odd souls has, of course, its Mairie, Hôtel de Ville, and Gendarmerie, governing itself after the manner of French villages.

Whilst the ladies of the house chatted with

me they knitted away at socks and stockings, in coarse, bright-coloured wool. Such articles are never bought, the home-made substitute being much more economical in the end. As an instance of the solid comfort of these apparently frugal folks, let me mention their home-spun linen sheets. My hostess showed me some coarse bed linen lately woven for her in the village. Calico sheets, she said, were much cheaper, but she preferred this durable home-spun even at three times the price. An old woman in the village still plied the loom, working up neighbours' materials at three francs a day. The hemp has to be purchased also, so that the home-spun sheet is a luxury; "and at the same time," the housewife added, "a work of charity. This poor old woman lives by her loom. It is a satisfaction to help her to a mouthful of bread."

The moon had risen when I took leave, hostess, little daughter, and sister, all accompanying me to the station, reiterating their wish to see me again. Nothing, indeed, would be pleasanter than to idle away weeks amid this adorable scenery and these charming people. But life is short and France is immense. The genially uttered *au revoir* becomes too often a mere figure of speech.

I add, by the way, that the little daughter, now trotting daily to the village school, is sure

to have a handsome dowry by and by. Four thousand pounds is no unusual portion of a rich peasant's daughter in these regions. As an old resident at Nice informed me, "The peasants are richer than the *bourgeoisie* or middle classes"—as they deserve to be, seeing their self-denial and thrift.



### III

#### ALPES MARITIMES (*continued*)

As I have mentioned, the nadir of peasant property must be sought in the mountainous regions immediately bordering on the Italian frontier. The condition of such villages as Castilon, half a day's journey by mule track from Mentone, may, however, be estimated by what we find within easy reach of Nice. Here we are brought into contact with an intermediate stage: folks do not live with their pigs and poultry as their poorer neighbours nearer the clouds; equally removed are they from the easy circumstances of the class just described.

Pessicarz is a hamlet not mentioned in either French or English guide-books; yet the drive thither is far more beautiful than the regulation excursions given in tourists' itineraries. The road winds in corkscrew fashion above the exquisite bay and imperial city,—city gleaming as if built of marble,—amid scenes of unbroken

solitude. Between groves of veteran olives and rocks rising higher and higher, we climb for an hour and a half, then leaving behind us the wide panorama of Nice, Cimiez, the sea, and villa-dotted hills, take a winding inland road, beautiful as can be imagined. Here, nestled amid chestnut woods, lay the little farm I had come to see, typical of the intermediate condition just described; it consisted of three hectares let at a rent of five hundred francs (between seven and eight acres, rented at twenty pounds a year), the products being shared between owner and tenant. This modified system of *métayage* or half profits is common here, and certainly affords a stepping-stone to better things. By dint of uncompromising economy, the *métayer* may ultimately become a small owner.

The farmhouse was substantially built and occupied by both landlord and tenant, the latter with his family living on the ground floor. This arrangement probably answers two purposes: economy is effected, and fraud prevented on the part of the *métayer*. Pigs and poultry are noisy animals, and if a dishonest tenant wanted to smuggle any of these away by night, they would certainly betray him. The housewife, in the absence of her husband, received me very kindly. I was of course introduced by a neighbour, who explained my errand, and she at once offered to

show me round. She was a sturdy, good-natured looking woman, very well dressed and speaking French fairly. The first thing she did was to show me her poultry, of which she was evidently very proud. This she accomplished by calling out in a loud voice, "Poules, poules, poules" ("chickens, chickens, chickens"), as if addressing children, whereupon they came fluttering out of the chestnut woods, fifty or more, some of fine breed. These fowls are kept for laying, and not for market, the eggs being sent daily into Nice. She then asked me indoors, the large kitchen being on one side of the door, the outhouses on the other. Beyond the kitchen was a large bedroom, her children, she explained, sleeping upstairs. Both rooms were smoke-dried to the colour of mahogany, unswept and very untidy, but the good woman seemed quite sensible of these disadvantages and apologised on account of narrow space. A large supply of clothes hung upon pegs in the bed-chamber, and it possessed also a very handsome old upright clock. The kitchen, besides stores of cooking utensils, had a stand for best china, and on the walls were numerous unframed pictures. I mention these trifling details to show that even among the poorer peasant farmers something is found for ornament; they do not live, as Zola would have us believe, for sordid gains alone.

We next visited the piggeries, of which she

possessed about a dozen in three separate styces. These are fed only upon grain and the kitchen wash supplied from hotels ; but she assured me that the disgusting story I had heard at Nice was true. There are certain pork-rearing establishments in the department, at which carrion is purchased and boiled down for fattening pigs. My hostess seemed quite alive to the unwholesomeness of such a practice, and we had a long talk about pigs, of which I happen to know something ; that they are dirt-loving animals is quite a mistake ; none more thoroughly enjoy a good litter of clean straw. I was glad to find this good woman entirely of the same opinion. She informed me with evident satisfaction that fresh straw was always thrown down on one side of the piggery at night and that the animals always selected it for repose.

The first lot were commodiously housed, but I reasoned with her with regard to the other two, the pig-styces being mere caverns without light or air, and the poor creatures grunting piteously to be let out. She told me that they were always let out at sundown, and heard what I had to say about pigs requiring air, let us hope to some purpose. Certainly, departmental professors have an uphill task before them in out-of-the-way regions. These poor people are said to be extremely frugal as a rule, but too apt to squander

their years' savings at a paternal fête, wedding, or any other festivity. Generations must elapse ere they are raised to the level of the typical French peasant. On the score of health they may compare favourably with any race. A fruit and vegetable diet seems sufficient in this climate. Besides her poultry and pigs my farmeress had not much to show me ; but a plot of flowers for market, a little corn, and a few olive trees added grist to the mill. On the whole—want of comfort, cleanliness, and order apart—I should say that even such a condition contrasts favourably with that of an English agricultural labourer. Without doubt, were we to inquire closely into matters, we should discover a sum of money invested or laid by for future purchases utterly beyond the reach of a Suffolk ploughman.

Just below the little farm is a philanthropic experiment interesting to English visitors. This is the agricultural orphanage founded by an Englishman two years ago, seventeen waifs and strays having been handed over to him by the Municipal Council of Nice. The education of the poor little lads is examined once a year by a school inspector, in other respects the protégés are left to their new patron. Here they are taught household and farm work, fruit and flower culture, the business of the dairy, carpentering, and other trades, being afterwards

placed out. I question whether an English Board of Guardians would so readily hand over seventeen workhouse lads to a foreigner, but it is to be hoped that the Nicois authorities will have no reason to regret their confidence. The boys do no work on Sundays, and once a year have a ten days' tramp in the country ; the buildings are spacious and airy, but I was sorry to see a plank bed used as a punishment. Indeed I should say that the system pursued savours too much of the military. Here, be it remembered, no juvenile criminals are under restraint, only foundlings guilty of burdening society.

Very different is the impression produced by the State Horticultural College recently opened at Antibes.

Around the lovely little bay the country still remains pastoral and unspoiled ; a mile or two from the railway station and we are in the midst of rural scenes, tiny farms border the road, patches of corn, clover, vineyard, and flower-garden—flowers form the chief harvest of these sea-board peasants,—orange, lemon, and olive groves with here and there a group of palms, beyond these the violet hills and dazzling blue sea ; such is the scenery, and could a decent little lodging be found in its midst, the holiday resort were perfect.

One drawback to existence is the treatment of animals. As I drove towards the college a

countryman passed with a cart and pair of horses, the hindmost had two raw places on his haunches as large as a penny piece. I hope and believe that in England such an offender would have got seven days' imprisonment. The Italians, as we all know, have no feeling for animals, and the race here is semi-Italian—wholly so, if we may judge by physiognomy and complexion.

Until the foundation of the Horticultural College here, the only one in existence on French soil was that of Versailles. Whilst farm-schools have been opened in various parts of the country, and special branches have their separate institutions, the teaching of horticulture remained somewhat in abeyance. Forestry is studied at Nancy, husbandry in general at Graud - Jouan, Grignan, and Amiens, the culture of the vine at Montpellier, drainage and irrigation at Quimperlé, all these great schools being made accessible to poorer students by means of scholarships.

In no other region of France could a Horticultural College be so appropriately placed as in the department of the Alpes Maritimes. It is not only one vast flower-garden, but at the same time a vast conservatory, the choice flowers exported for princely tables in winter being all reared under glass. How necessary, then, that every detail of this delightful and elaborate culture should be taught the people, whose

mainstay it is, a large proportion being as entirely dependent upon flowers as the honey bee ! Here, and in the neighbourhood of Nice, they are cultivated for market and exportation, not for perfume distilleries as at Grasse.

The State School of Antibes was created by the Minister of Agriculture in 1891, and is so unlike anything of the kind in England that a brief description will be welcome. The first point to be noted is its essentially democratic spirit. When did a farm labourer's son among ourselves learn any more of agriculture than his father or fellow-workmen could teach him ? At Antibes, as in the numerous farm-schools (*fermes-écoles*) now established throughout France, the pupils are chiefly recruited from the peasant class.

How, will it be asked, can a small tenant farmer or owner of three or four acres afford to lose his son's earnings as soon as he quits school, much less to pay even a small sum for his education ? The difficulty is met thus : in the first place, the yearly sum for board, lodging, and teaching is reduced to the minimum, viz., five hundred francs a year ; in the second, large numbers of scholarships are open to pupils who have successfully passed the examination of primary schools, and whose parents can prove their inability to pay the fees. No matter how poor he may be, the French peasant takes a long look



ahead. He makes up his mind to forfeit his son's help or earnings for a year or two in view of the ulterior advantage. A youth, having studied at Antibes, would come out with instruction worth much more than the temporary loss of time and money. That parents do reason in this way is self-evident. On the occasion of my visit, of the twenty-seven students by far the larger proportion were exhibitioners, sons of small owners or tenants. Lads are admitted from fourteen years and upwards, and must produce the certificate of primary studies, answering to that of our Sixth Standard, or pass an entrance examination. The school is under State supervision, the teaching staff consisting of certificated professors. The discipline is of the simplest, yet, I was assured, quite efficacious. If a lad, free scholar or otherwise, misbehaves himself, he is called before the director and warned that a second reprimand only will be given, the necessity of a third entailing expulsion. No more rational treatment could be devised.

Besides practical teaching in the fields and gardens, consisting as yet of only twenty-five hectares, or nearly sixty acres, a somewhat bewildering course of study is given. The list of subjects begins well. First, a lad is here taught his duties as the head of a family, a citizen, and a man of business. Then come geography, history,

arithmetic, book-keeping, trigonometry, linear drawing, mechanics, chemistry, physics, natural history, botany, geology, "agrologic," or the study of soils, irrigation, political economy. Whilst farming generally is taught, the speciality of the school is fruit and flower culture. A beautiful avenue of palm and orange trees leads from the road to the block of buildings, the director's house standing just outside. I was fortunate in finding this gentleman at home, and he welcomed me with the courtesy, I may say cordiality, I have ever received from professors of agriculture and practical farmers in France.

We immediately set out for our survey, my companion informing me, to my surprise, that the gardens I now gazed on so admiringly formed a mere wilderness a few years ago, that is to say, until their purchase by the State. The palm and orange trees had been brought hither and transplanted, everything else had sprung up on the roughly-cleared ground. Palm trees are reared on the school lands for exportation to Holland, there, of course, to be kept under glass; ere long the exportation of palms and orange trees will doubtless become as considerable as that of hothouse flowers.

I was shown magnificent palms fifteen years old, and nurseries of tiny trees, at this stage of their existence unlovely as birch brooms.

Hitherto, majestic although its appearance, the palm of the Riviera has not produced dates. The director is devoting much time to this subject, and hopes ere long to gather his crop.

As we passed between the orange trees, here and there the deep green glossy fruit turning to gold, I heard the same report as at Pessicarz. At neither place can the lads resist helping themselves to the unripe oranges. Sour apples, and green oranges seem quite irresistible to hobbledehoys. The trees were laden with fruit, and, unless blown off by a storm, the crop would be heavy. An orange tree on an average produces to the value of two hundred francs.

I was next taken to the newly-created vineyards, some consisting of French grafts on American stock, others of American plants; but vines are capricious, and one vineyard looked sickly enough, although free from parasites. The climate did not suit it, that was all.

But by far the most important and interesting crops here are the hothouse flowers. I fancy few English folks think of glass-houses in connection with the Riviera. Yet the chief business of horticulturists during a large portion of the year is in the conservatory. Brilliant as is the winter sun, the nights are cold and the fall of temperature after sundown extremely rapid. Only the hardier flowers, therefore, remain out of doors.

I was now shown the glass-houses being made ready for the winter. All the choice flowers, roses, carnations, and others, sent to Paris, London, Berlin, St. Petersburg, are grown under glass. Roses thus cultivated will bring four francs per dozen to the grower ; I was even told of choicest kinds sold from the conservatories at a franc each. It may easily be conceived how profitable is this commerce, destined without doubt to become more so as the culture of flowers improves. New varieties are ever in demand for royal or millionaires' tables, bridal bouquets, funeral wreaths. I was told the discoverer or creator of a blue carnation would make his fortune. I confess this commercial aspect of flowers takes something from their poetry. Give me a cottager's plot of sweet-williams and columbine instead of the floral paragon evolved for the gratification of the curious ! As we strolled about we came upon groups of students at work. All politely raised their hats when we passed, and by their look and manner might have been taken for young gentlemen. As the late Mr. Barham Zincke remarked in his invaluable sketch of Auvergne, the French peasant lads show none of the uncontrolled rowdyism and love of rudeness for rudeness' sake to which we are accustomed by the English "boy in the street."

A great future doubtless awaits this delightfully

placed Horticultural School. Whilst the object primarily aimed at by the State is the education of native gardeners and floriculturists, other results may be confidently expected. No rule keeps out foreigners, and just as our Indian candidates for the Forestry service prepare themselves at Nancy, so intending fruit-growers in Tasmania will in time betake themselves to Antibes. A colonial, as well as an international element is pretty sure to be added. French subjects beyond seas will certainly avail themselves of privileges not to be had at home, carrying away with them knowledge of the greatest service in tropical France. Horticulture as a science must gain greatly by such a centre, new methods being tried, improved systems put into practice. In any case, the department may fairly be congratulated on its recent acquisition, one, alas, we have to set against very serious drawbacks! In these intensely hot and glaring days of mid-October, the only way of enjoying life is to betake oneself to a sailing-boat. Few English folks realise the torture of mosquito-invaded nights on the Riviera. As to mosquito curtains they afford a remedy oftentimes worse than the disease, keeping out what little air is to be had and admitting, here and there, one mosquito of slenderer bulk and more indomitable temper than the rest. After two or three utterly sleepless nights the most enthusiastic traveller

will sigh for gray English skies, pattering drops and undisturbed sleep. At sea, you may escape both blinding glare and mosquito bites. A boat is also the only means of realising the beauty of the coast. Were I to revisit the Riviera I should charter a craft at Marseilles, and make the journey by short stages to the Italian frontier. Most beautiful is the roundabout sail from Cannes to the Île St. Marguérite, I say roundabout, because if the wind is adverse, the boatmen have to make a circuit, going out of their course to the length of four or five miles. Every tourist knows the story of the Iron Mask; few are perhaps aware that in the horrible prison in which Louis XIV. kept him for seventeen years, Protestants were also incarcerated, their only crime being that they would not perjure themselves, in other words, feign certain doctrines to please the tyrant.

At the present time the cells adjoining the historic dungeon of the Masque de Fer, are more cheerfully occupied. Soldiers are placed there for slight breaches of discipline, their confinement varying from twelve hours to a few days. We heard two or three occupants gaily wiling away the time by singing patriotic songs, under the circumstances the best thing they could do. Lovely indeed was the sail back to Cannes, the sea, deep indigo, the sky, intensest blue, white villas

dotting the green hills, far away the violet mountains. When we betake ourselves to the railway or carriage road, we must make one comparison very unfavourable to English landscape. Here building stone, as bricks and mortar with us, is daily and hourly invading pastoral scenes, but the hideous advertising board is absent in France. We do not come upon monster advertisements of anti-bilious pills, hair dye, or soap amid olive groves and vineyards. Let us hope that the vulgarisation permitted among ourselves will not be imitated by our neighbours.

In 1789 Arthur Young described the stretch of country between Frèjus and Cannes as a desert, "not one mile in twenty cultivated." Will Europe and America, with the entire civilised world, furnish valetudinarians in sufficient numbers to fill the hotels, villas, and boarding-houses now rising at every stage of the same way? The matter seems problematic, yet last winter accommodation at Nice barely sufficed for the influx of visitors.

## IV

### ALPES MARITIMES (*continued*)

NICE is the most beautiful city in France, I am tempted to say the most beautiful city I ever beheld. It is the last in which I should choose to live.

Site, sumptuosity, climate, vegetation here attain their acme ; so far, indeed, Nice may be pronounced flawless. During a certain portion of the year, existence, considered from the physical and material point of view, were surely here perfect. When we come to the social and moral aspect of the most popular health resort in Europe, a very different conclusion is forced upon us.

Blest in itself, Nice is cursed in its surroundings. So near is that plague spot of Europe, Monte Carlo, that it may almost be regarded as a suburb. For a few pence, in half an hour, you may transport yourself from a veritable earthly Paradise to what can only be described as a gilded Inferno. Unfortunately evil is more



contagious than good. Certain medical authorities aver that the atmosphere of Mentone is impregnated with microbes of phthisis; the germs of moral disease infecting the immediate neighbourhood of Nice are far more appalling. Nor are symptoms wanting of the spread of that moral disease. The municipal council of this beautiful city, like Esau, have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. Within the last two years they have conceded the right of gambling to the Casino, the proprietors purchasing the right by certain outlay in the way of improvements, a new public garden, and so on. As yet roulette and rouge and noir are not permitted here, the gambling at present carried on being apparently harmless. It is in reality even more insidious, being a stepping-stone to vice, a gradual initiation into desperate play. Just as addiction to absinthe is imbibed by potions quite innocuous in the beginning, so the new Casino at Nice schools the gamester from the outset, slowly and by infinitesimal degrees preparing him for ruin, dishonour, and suicide.

The game played is called *Petits Chevaux*, and somewhat resembles our nursery game of steeplechase. The stakes are only two francs, but as there are eight to each horse, and you may take as many as you please, it is quite easy to lose several hundred francs in one evening—or, for

the matter of that, one afternoon. Here, as at Monte Carlo, the gambling rooms remain open from noon till midnight. The buildings are on an imposing scale: reading rooms, a winter garden, concerts, entertainments of various kinds blinding the uninitiated to the real attraction of the place, namely, the miniature horses spinning around the tables. Already—I write of October—eager crowds stood around, and we heard the incessant chink of falling coin. This modified form of gambling is especially dangerous to the young. Parents, who on no account would let their children toss a five-franc piece on to the tables of Monte Carlo, see no harm in watching them play at *petits chevaux*. They should, first of all, make a certain ghastly pilgrimage I will now relate.

Monaco does not as yet, politically speaking, form a part of French territory; from a geographical point of view we are obliged so to regard it. Thus French geographers and writers of handbooks include the tiny principality, which for the good of humanity, let us hope, may ere long be swallowed up by an earthquake—or moralised! The traveller then is advised to take train to Monaco, and, arrived at the little station, whisper his errand in the cab-driver's ear, "To the suicides' cemetery."

For the matter of that, it is an easy walk

enough for all who can stand the burning sun and glare of white walls and buildings. Very lovely too is the scene as we slowly wind upwards, the road bordered with aloes and cypresses ; above, handsome villas standing amid orange groves and flowers ; below, the sparkling sea.

A French cemetery, with its wreaths of bead-work and artificial violets, has ever a most depressing appearance. That of Monaco is like any other, we find the usual magnificence, and usual tinsel. Many beautiful trees, shrubs, and flowers, however, relieve the gloom and every inch is exquisitely kept.

Quite apart from this vast burial ground, on the other side of the main entrance, is a small enclosure, walled in and having a gate of open iron work always locked. Here, in close proximity to heaps of garden rubbish, broken bottles and other refuse, rest the suicides of Monte Carlo, buried by the parish gravedigger, without funeral and without any kind of religious ceremony. Each grave is marked by an upright bit of wood, somewhat larger than that by which gardeners mark their seeds, and on which is painted a number, nothing more. Apart from these, are stakes driven into the ground which mark as yet unappropriated spots. The indescribable dreariness of the scene is heightened by two monumental stones garlanded with wreaths and surrounded by

flowers. The first records the memory of a young artizan and was raised by his fellow-workmen; the second commemorates brotherly and sisterly affection. Both suicides were driven to self-murder by play. The remainder are mere numbers. There are poor gamesters as well as rich, and it is only or chiefly these, who are put into the ground here. The bodies of rich folks' relatives, if identified, are immediately removed, and, by means of family influence, interred with religious rites. Many suicides are buried at Nice and Mentone, but the larger proportion, farther off still. Not to descant further on this grim topic, let me now say something about Monte Carlo itself.

Never anywhere was snare more plainly set in the sight of any bird. There is little in the way of amusement that you do not get for nothing here, a beautiful pleasure ground, reading-rooms as luxurious and well supplied as those of a West-end club, one of the best orchestras in Europe, and all without cost of a farthing.

The very lavishness arouses suspicion in the minds of the wary. Why should we be supplied, not only with every English newspaper we ever heard of, but with *Punch*, *Truth*, and similar publications to boot? Why should Germans, Russians, Dutch, every other European nation, receive treatment equally generous? Again, to be able to sit down at elegant writing-tables and

use up a quire of fine notepaper and a packet of envelopes to match, if we chose, how is all this managed? The concerts awaken a feeling of even intenser bewilderment. Not so much as a penny are we allowed to pay for a programme, to say nothing of the trained musicians. Where is the compensation of such liberality?

The gambling tables, crowded even at three o'clock on an October afternoon, answer our question. The season begins later, but gamblers cannot wait. "*Faites le jeu, messieurs, messieurs, faites le jeu,*" is already heard from noon to midnight, and the faster people ruin themselves and send a pistol shot through their heads, the faster others take their place. It is indeed melancholy to reflect how many once respectable lives, heads of families, even wives and mothers, are being gradually lured on to bankruptcy and suicide.

In cruellest contrast to the moral degradation fostered below is the enormous cathedral in course of erection directly above the gambling-rooms. The millions of francs expended on this sumptuous basilica are supplied by the proprietors of the Casino and the Prince of Monaco, on the mediæval theory, I presume, of purchasing indulgence for evil-doing. Nothing can strike the stranger with a stronger sense of incongruity—a church rising from the very heart of a Pandemonium!

Tremendous as is already the influx of visitors, greater numbers are evidently expected. Both at Monte Carlo and Monaco hotels and villas are rising as fast as carpenters and masons can put timber and stone together.

Monaco is a pretty, toy-like Liliputian kingdom, compared with which the smallest German principality of former days was enormous. Curiously enough, whilst Monte Carlo is peopled with painted women and gamesters, the only tenants of Monaco seem to be priests, nuns, and their pupils. The miniature capital, state, and kingdom in one, consists chiefly of convents and seminaries, and wherever you go you come upon these Jesuit fathers with their carefully-guarded troops of lads in uniform. A survey of the entire principality of Monaco, Monte Carlo included, requires about a quarter of an hour. Nowhere, surely, on the face of the civilised globe is so much moral degradation contained in so small a space. Fortunately, the poisonous atmosphere of the Casino does not seem to affect the native poor. Everywhere we are struck by the thrifty, sober, hard-working population ; beggars or ragged, wretched-looking creatures are very rare. If the authorities of the Alpes Maritimes have set themselves to put down vagrancy, they have certainly succeeded.

Nice is a home for the millionaire and the working-man. The intermediate class is not

wanted. Visitors are expected to have money, are welcomed on that account, and if they have to look to pounds, shillings, and pence, had much better remain at home.

Woe betide the needy invalid sent hither in search of sunshine! Sunshine is indeed a far more expensive luxury on the Riviera than we imagine, seeing that only rooms with a north aspect are cheap, and a sunless room is much more comfortless and unwholesome than a well-warmed one, no matter its aspect, in England. The only cheap commodity, one unfortunately we cannot live upon, is the bouquet. In October, that is to say, before the arrival of winter visitors, flowers are to be had for the asking; on the market-place an enormous bouquet of tube-roses, violets, carnations, myrtle, priced at two or three francs, the price in Paris being twenty. Fruit also I found cheap, figs fourpence a dozen, and other kinds in proportion. This market is the great sight of Nice, and seen on a cloudless day—indeed it would be difficult to see it on any other—is a glory of colour of which it is impossible to give the remotest notion. I was somewhat taken aback to find Sunday less observed here as a day of rest than in any other French town I know, and not many French towns are unknown to me. The flower and fruit market were crowded, drapers', grocers', booksellers' shops open all day

long, traffic unbroken as usual. I should have imagined that a city, for generations taken possession of by English visitors, would by this time have fallen into our habit of respecting Sunday alike in the interests of man and beast. Of churches, both English and American, there is no lack. Let us hope that the Protestant clergy will turn their attention to this subject. Let us hope also that the entire English-speaking community will second their efforts in this direction. Further, I will put in a good word for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals founded at Nice some years since, and sadly in need of funds. The Society is backed up by the Government in accordance with the admirable *Loi Grammont*, but, as is the case with local societies in England, requires extraneous help. Surely rich English valetudinarians will not let this humane work stand still, seeing as they must do daily, the urgent necessity of such interference! From the windows of a beautiful villa on the road to Villefranche, I saw baskets of chickens brought in from Italy, the half of which were dead or dying from suffocation. As the owner of the villa said, "Not even self-interest teaches this Italian humanity." By packing his fowls so as to afford them breathing space, he would double his gains. The habit of cruelty is too inveterate. My host assured me that large numbers of



poultry sent across the frontier are suffocated on the way.

Horrible also is the pigeon-shooting at Monte Carlo. Hundreds of these wretched birds are killed for sport every day during the winter. The wounded or escaped fly back after a while to be shot at next day.

The word "villa" calls for comment. Such a designation is appropriate here. The palatial villas of Nice, standing amid orangeries and palm groves, are worthy of their Roman forerunners. For the future I shall resent the term as applied in England to eight-roomed, semi-detached constructions, poorly built, and with a square yard of flower-bed in front. Many of the Niçois villas are veritable palaces, and what adds to their sumptuousness is the indoor greenery, dwarf palms, india-rubber trees, and other handsome evergreens decorating corridor and landing-places. The English misnomer has, nevertheless, compensations in snug little kitchen and decent servant's bedroom. I looked over a handsome villa here, type, I imagine, of the rest. The servants' bedrooms were mere closets with openings on to a dark corridor, no windows, fireplace, cupboard, or any convenience. The kitchen was a long, narrow room, after the manner of French kitchens, with space by the window for two or three chairs. I ventured to ask the mistress of the house where

the servants sat when work was done. Her answer was suggestive—

“They have no time to sit anywhere.”

It will be seen that our gray skies and mean-looking dwellings have compensations.



## PART VII

PROVINCES : GÉVAUDAN, ROUERQUE,  
HAUTE AUVERGNE



# I

## DEPARTMENTS : LOZÈRE, AVEYRON, CANTAL

FRENCH geographers and editors of tourists' handbooks conveniently comprise the above-mentioned regions under the head of "Les Cévennes."<sup>1</sup> Travellers who have accompanied me on former occasions to Clermont-Ferrand, Le Puy or Nîmes, will do well to visit the highlands of Central France of which these cities may be called the outposts. Above all, he should halt at Mende, *chef-lieu* of the Lozère, and admirable starting-point for the Causses ; to-day a popular holiday ground, a few years back a name puzzling even to educated Frenchmen, omitted from military maps, and only added by Littré to the Appendix of his great dictionary ! In 1887, my landlady at Mende assured me that she had never before received an English lady ; in 1888, I was unable to obtain at Avignon any kind of

<sup>1</sup> See *Les Cévennes*, par E. A. Martel. Paris, 1893.

information as to routes and accommodation. At the present time, tourist's tickets are issued in Paris on Mr. Cook's principle, including hire of boats, carriages, guides, and hotel expenses ; the Causses are animated with tourists from July till October, and the most frugal and artless population of France are in danger of being demoralised by what Americans call, a boom !

How rapid has been the genesis of the Causses, successive editions of Murray and Joanne tell us. I turn to the fifteenth and sixteenth issues of our excellent English guide, dated respectively 1881 and 1884, to find the Causse de Sauveterre mentioned, that is all. No allusion is made to the now famous rapids of the Tarn or of the dolomite city of Montpellier le Vieux, generally admitted to be one of nature's marvels. I next have recourse to Joanne's no less trustworthy guides for French readers. The edition of 1876 ignores the Causses as a picturesque region. Ten years later we find that visitors are recommended to traverse the plateaux and explore the river, nothing is said of the strange scene within close proximity. "Citadels, domes, parapets of dolomite, silvery rock thrown into every conceivable form, the imposing pile blocking the horizon, the heavens darkened with the shadow of a mighty Babylon, but a Babylon untenanted from its origin, a phantom capital, an eldritch city,

whose streets now for the first time echo with human voice and tread.”<sup>1</sup>

Later editions of both Murray and Joanne devote pages to the unknown region of a few years back, and it has been fully described by both French and English tourists. A glance at maps of fifteen or twenty years ago enable us to realise the former isolation of the Lozère. Mende, its *chief-lieu*, was the last but one of the sixty-nine bishoprics of France to be endowed with a railway; even now, whilst some departments are intersected by dozens of iron roads, this one boasts of but three. The tourist is still compelled to use the old-fashioned diligence between Langogne, on the main Bourbonnais line, and Mende, whilst all zig-zagging must be made by private carriage.

So isolated still are certain portions of the department that the Caussenard or inhabitant of Sauveterre is almost regarded by his neighbours of the plain as an alien. He uses patois, wears a sheepskin after the manner of the Greek shepherd, fares on ryebread (made, so we are told, of husks as well as grain), bacon, cheese, and potatoes, drinks water, and only hears mass once a fortnight in summer, and not at all during the long winter.

As we drive from Mende to St. Énimie, we come upon wild-looking, weather-worn figures,

<sup>1</sup> *The Roof of France*, London 1889.



men, women, and girls keeping their half-dozen sheep or goats, patiently turning up the stony soil or getting in some tiny crop,—rye, potatoes, or clover.

A French traveller, Vaysse de Villiers, in his *Itinéraire descriptif de la France* 1816, crossed the "horrible Causse of Sauveterre." "Never," he said, "have I seen a more complete aridity, so utter a desert." At the present time the tourist finds scattered farms and gradual encroachment of the peasant owner. Portions of land here and there betoken quite recent reclamation; huge blocks of stone have been wrenched up, Heaven knows how, and lie, conspicuously piled in the midst of a tiny oasis, peaceful, pathetic trophy of the unheroic! French travellers assure us that these poor people are very hospitable, offering the belated stranger the best accommodation they have, and the homely resources of dairy and larder.

It is not my intention here to describe these great limestone plateaux from a picturesque point of view. The "jurassic archipelago of Central France," thus M. Réclus describes it, has now been familiarised to the reading world by French and English tourists. I feel, however, that this work would be incomplete without some mention of districts hitherto cut off from the rest of the world, fossilised by force of natural position, in

the fact, if not in the letter, of recent discovery. To the geologist and the hydrographer, no less than to the tourist and the economist, the new field offers abundant and varied interest. On the Causses, sterility of soil, a Siberian climate, and geographical isolation reach their climax, below are sequestered valleys of wondrous beauty and luxuriance. These vast promontories attain the height of the Malvern Hills, in some instances even of Skiddaw and Helvellyn ; their superficies cover tracts as extensive as Salisbury Plain or Exmoor and Dartmouth.

Not without witchery in summer-time are the tablelands white with snow from October till May. As we drive across Sauveterre, desert upon desert of limestone lie around, the nearer undulations cold and gray in tone, the remoter taking warm and lovely hues, gold brown, deep orange just tinted with rose, reddish-purple, and pale pink. For the most part, the scene is absolutely silent and solitary, not a habitation, not a human being in sight, at intervals patches of rye and potatoes breaking the monotony. The most extraordinary feature of the Causses are the underground *avens*<sup>1</sup> or abysses, lakes, and rivers, often at a depth of two or three hundred feet from the surface, some, indeed, much deeper, and all of

<sup>1</sup> "Le mot *avenc* (*aven*) vient du celtique *avain*, ruisseau."—Daubrée, *Eaux souterrains*.

recent discovery. The openings, or *bouches de l'Enfer* as the peasants call them, occur on hill-side, vertical cliff, or in level field, small wonder that they aroused a feeling of awe and horror! The accounts of subterranean exploration in these regions read more like a page of romance than sober reality. In the neighbouring department of the Lot the subterranean lakes and river of Padirac outdo travellers' tales. Two miles of underground punting, grotto after grotto, cavern after cavern, now for the first time explored, and lit up by magnesian light, offering fairy scenes. Here, indeed, runs a river—

“Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.”

Never was splendid enterprise more splendidly rewarded! The group of French explorers not only beheld scenes outrivalling recorded travel, in majesty and loveliness defying description, in a material sense they found a kingdom! We learn that one of the pioneers has purchased river, caves, and grottoes, with the intention of opening all to tourists.

In the present work the Causses concern us from a social and economic point of view, here inseparable from the picturesque. Within the last few years railways have placed Mende on the footing of other towns; the natural marvels recently

discovered promise to transform the Cinderella of French provinces into one of the richest. How far the process will raise or benefit the people remains to be seen. Their moral condition does not seem hitherto to have suffered either from poverty or isolation. In no part of rural France have I met with more affability, dignified bearing, and probity than among the peasants of the Lozère. In one village hostelry the landlady, before allowing me to pay, examined the cold leg of mutton set before myself and companion to see how much we had eaten. In another, the hostess kept a quantity of money in the drawer of my dressing-table—the drawer locked certainly, but with an old lock that would not have resisted a blow. My remonstrance was met with the reply, "There are no dishonest folks here." A third housewife, visited for the second time, loaded me with gifts of fruit and cheese at departure. A fourth, with charming grace, did the honours of the neighbourhood, taking her English guest to visit convents, farms, and picturesque points of view. To the hospitality of the peasant farmers I can bear ample testimony.

From an agricultural point of view, the Lozère, the Aveyron, and the Cantal, offer divergences no less striking than that of scenery. So poor is the soil round about Montpellier le Vieux, for instance, that the owner of nearly a thousand acres told

me in 1888 that he intended to let it and give his time to inn-keeping and the accommodation of tourists. The short season of excursions would bring in more than farming the Causses on a large scale. This farmer possessed several hundred sheep and a team of oxen, and employed several day labourers.

Even in the neighbourhood of Mende farms are not let by the hectare, but according to the number of sheep or cattle they will keep. Between Mende and St. Chély d'Apcher on the road to St. Flour, a farm of several hundred acres was pointed out to me, let at fifty pounds a year. In the Lozère as in the neighbouring departments, we find no uniformity of tenure ; as a native put it to me, " Farms are of all sorts and sizes, big ones, little ones, and the betwixt and between, but everybody has his little bit " (" Tout le monde a son petit lot ").

On the Causses neither gooseberry nor apple will ripen ; scanty crops of buckwheat, rye, oats, hay, and potatoes reward the husbandman. The high road is bordered with service berry trees or mountain ash, failing these, stone pillars the height of a man. Such columns recalling Druidic stones, serve for the traveller's guidance in winter when the vast landscape is under snow. Summer on these altitudes is brief and the reign of winter terrible.

A change for the better may be in store for future generations. Just as railways and other innovations are transforming the country socially and materially, physical agencies have been set to work. Formerly the Lozère possessed magnificent forests, reduced during the wars of religion by four-fifths. The natural result of these denudations was increased aridity of soil and rudeness of climate. Treeless tracts are now replanted, and the promiscuous browsing of goats on mountain sides is no longer permitted. Who can say? Perhaps these Steppes of central France may become sunny and fruitful.

If to ascend the Roof of France, thus indeed is the Lozère called, is an arduous task, the coming down is rapid and easy enough. Almost miraculous seems the change, whether we take train from St. Chély d'Apcher<sup>1</sup> to Rodez, *chef-lieu* of the Aveyron or drive from Le Rozier near Montpellier le Vieux to Millau, second town of the same department. I took the first route in September at midday, quitting sleet and wind, with the thermometer rapidly falling to zero, by sundown having exchanged frowning peaks, and stormy deserts for peach orchards, vineyards, softly-murmuring streams and the temperature of July.

About the same time of the year, twelve months later, I reached Millau by way of the Causse Noir

<sup>1</sup> The line from this place to Marvéjols was opened in 1887.

to experience transformation hardly less striking, close under that mighty shadow lying scenes of fertility and graciousness. This prettily placed, hot, noisy, malodorous town is now chiefly given up to glove-making. We come upon women plying this trade amid scenes of oriental brilliance, ochre-walled interiors with balconies running round each storey, oleanders and pomegranates flaming against the deep blue sky ; by open door and casement family groups, women and girls sewing gloves, whilst the children and household pets sport around. All is careless, sunny, southern life.

Rodez, with its grand cathedral tower, vast monolith of terra-cotta, richly sculptured ! stands like a lighthouse above the sea. Its site is a lofty escarpment or isthmus almost cut off by the river from the adjacent plain. From the edge of this promontory we gaze southward upon the valley of the Aveyron and the far-off Larzac,<sup>1</sup> a mere blue cloud on the horizon ; looking westward from the public promenade at the other end of the town we see a richly-cultivated plain, vineyards and fields set round with the purple Cantal range.

Nothing can afford a sharper contrast than the ruddy soil and red rock of the Aveyron and the green pastoral Cantal land of smiling valleys, wide meadows, and verdant hills. The railway takes

<sup>1</sup> " *Larga saxa.*"—Martel.

us direct to Aurillac, *chef-lieu* of the Cantal and ancient capital of the Haute Auvergne, an excellent centre for the study of rural life.

Strangely enough there formerly existed near Aurillac, a Dutch dairy founded by the State. Think of Dutch cheese being introduced into the land of Roquefort, Gruyère and Camembert ! Setting out in search of this I found instead a farm which may fairly be accepted as a type of leasehold occupations in this department. Unprovided with any kind of introduction, I was yet politely, even cordially received. The farmer's wife brought out galettes or flat cakes made of rye and oatmeal flour, cream, curds and whey, fresh butter and wine, and seemed quite concerned that we could not make a hearty lunch, as our afternoon repast is called in France. I had with me a young French lady, and we chatted in friendliest fashion whilst awaiting the master. The reception room was kitchen and bedchamber in one, curtained bedstead of master and mistress occupying one corner of the enormous kitchen ; leading out of this a second room for their married son, whilst the dairymaids slept upstairs. The floor was of uncarpeted stone but cleanly swept, and around were shelves of bright copper cooking vessels and crockery.

Our host soon came in and readily answered all my questions.



He was a tenant farmer, owning, however, a little land as well. Land here, as in the Lozère, is let not by the hectare, but computed by the heads of cattle it will maintain, a hectare and a half being allotted each animal. He possessed one hundred and twenty cows, and, besides this extent of pasturage, the farm comprised arable land, the whole making up nearly a thousand acres. Much larger occupations, he told me, are found in the Cantal. It is essentially a cheese-making region.

"We don't grow nearly enough corn for our own use in the Cantal," he said. "Large quantities have to be imported every year. Our cows keep us going."

The breed kept is the beautiful Cantal cow, small, red-coated, glossy, very gentle, but very shy. As, accompanied by our host, we walked up the narrow lane separating the farm from the road we met three separate droves returning to the stalls. Had we been peasant women and neighbours they would have passed us without notice. They discerned at a glance that we were strangers, and only by dint of coaxing and calling each animal by name, could the master induce them to pass.

The excellent Cantal cheese largely consumed throughout France has not yet come into the English market. It is not equal to the famous products of Normandy, Roquefort, and the Jura.

As the quality of the milk is first-rate, a delicious flavour being imparted by the abundance of aromatic herbs, such inferiority must arise from want of cleanliness and skill.

The dairy schools now established in various communes, and the teaching of State-paid professors of agriculture will most likely, ere long, bring the art of cheese-making here to perfection.

In the neighbourhood of Vic-sur-Cère I visited several farms, always being courteously received. I will only mention one of these, a leasehold of 1000 acres let at a rental of £600 a year, the largest occupation thereabouts. Here five women servants were boarded in the house, and several cheese-makers employed on the hills. The stock consisted of seventy-eight cows, five horses, four pair of team oxen, besides sheep, pigs, and poultry. Adjoining the larger occupations are peasant properties, dairy farms, market gardens, or arable land of a few acres; delightful it was to see the people working in tiny field or garden, or minding their sheep or geese, their decent appearance, cheerfulness, and healthful looks testifying to satisfactory conditions of life.

Far away on the summit of every alp may be descried the red roof of the cheese-maker's hut. Here, with his dog and cow-herd, he spends the summer months, descending to the plain with the first snowflakes. The *fromager* is especially

trained for his work, and receives from £25 to £30 a year with board and lodging. If married, he leaves wife and children behind him during his exile.

To reach one of these huts is quite an expedition. The road winds gradually upward for miles, at every turn affording wider and more beautiful views. Behind the verdant hills, southward of Vic-sur-Cère, the open pastures are dotted with huts, but fierce dogs lurk about, and, unless accompanied by a countryman, it is not safe to approach. The house, too, is dark, ill-ventilated, and unsavoury, having nothing in common with the exquisitely clean Norman dairy. A syndicate setting up model dairies is sadly needed.

The Cantal is one of the poorer departments. Every autumn thousands of workmen migrate to the various towns of Central France, even to Spain, there earning wages as woodcutters and carters, water-carriers, odd hands. It has been computed that the winter earnings of these migrants amount to a million and quarter francs,—we may be sure, ultimately invested in land.

In 1872, of a population of between two and three hundred thousand, the Cantal numbered only seventeen Protestants. The Aveyron possesses a consistorial church at St. Affrique, and several Protestant churches.

In the Lozère, theatre of the cruellest religious persecution, Protestantism has held its own, whilst Catholicism shows a falling off in numbers.<sup>1</sup> In 1885 there were 117,000 Catholics in this department and 21,000 Protestants. Most Lozèrien towns have Reformed churches, among these Florac, where, during the Camisard war, a *chambre ardente* or torture chamber was established for the purpose of bringing so-called heretics to reason.<sup>2</sup>

Within reach of stupendous scenery, what these towns want is wholesale drainage and sanitation, improvements, alas! far more costly than the raising of statues or the laying out of boulevards.

The traveller, having made a round of Cévennes travel, may join the main lines either at Nîmes or Clermont, cities described in my former volume. All who have followed in my footsteps, alike here and on former occasions, will possess a panorama, memorable, never-to-be-forgotten, full of variety, magnificence, and beauty. Where, indeed, is to be matched the prospect that awaits us in such a survey of France of To-day?

<sup>1</sup> See Joanne, *La Lozère*.

<sup>2</sup> See Note 13.



# APPENDIX I

## FRENCH PROGRESS

I HERE briefly summarise French progress—intellectual, social, material—since the establishment of the Third Republic. Without such a *résumé*, my work on France of To-day would be incomplete indeed. Glowing records of travel are liable to the charge of enthusiasm ; information gathered on the spot and from the best authorities is not always accepted ; of no country are travellers' tales more likely to appear high-flown. Falling back upon fact, offering statements each reader can verify for himself, an author may freely challenge criticism. From these concluding pages opinion will be excluded. I confine myself to matters beyond question, demonstrating by proof positive what has been achieved under the Tricolour within a period of twenty-two years.

Nothing affords greater assistance in an inquiry of this kind than a collection of maps, railway guides, and tourists' handbooks. A comparison of such works, published prior to the Franco-Prussian war with those now in use, convincingly demonstrates one phase, that a most important one, of material progress. Alike iron-roads, water-ways, and other means of communication have been enormously increased. The following

statement occurs in Murray's *Handbook to France*, part i. 1892 : "In France the construction of railways makes enormous progress ; 360 English miles of new lines were opened between August 1890 and March 1891." The development of French railways is thus summarised by the first statistical authority in France : in 1872 18,749 kilometers existed ; in 1888, 35,264 kilometers existed. Within sixteen years, and in spite of the drain upon national resources, railways had doubled.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the State was paying off the war indemnity, 200 millions sterling, satisfying the claims of the Orleans princes,<sup>2</sup> raising forts, constructing ironclads, building hospitals, training colleges, primary, secondary, and technical schools, a network of railway was being spread over the country. Towns and villages hitherto cut off, alike socially and materially, from great centres, were thus put into communication with the capital. Among the former were several *chefs-lieux* and bishoprics, Mende and St. Claude, for instance. The capital of the Lozère would not infrequently remain snowbound for days, even mounted letter-carriers being unable to penetrate the mountain roads.

When I visited Mende in 1887, the townsfolk had hardly waked up to the benefits of their railway. One citizen complained to me that it ruined the carriage proprietor and carter ; another that imported goods, cloths, and the like, were supplanting local manufacture.

<sup>1</sup> *La France Économique*, par A. de Foville, chef du Bureau de Statistique du Ministère des Finances. Paris, 1890.

Unless when stated, this writer is my authority on statistics.

<sup>2</sup> Hardly was the Republic proclaimed, at a time when the resources of the nation were exhausted, when every nerve was being strained to rid French soil of the enemy, the Orleans princes claimed the millions confiscated by Napoleon III.

More enlightened views of political economy were hardly to be expected under the circumstances.

The traveller in France, whose experience extends over a period of fifteen or twenty years, requires neither statistics nor maps. I have for myself seen the gradual transformation effected by the iron road. North, south, east, west, no matter in which direction I retrace my steps after a few years' absence, I find new railways. In many cases the line has created health resorts, hence a profitable season for the inhabitants. Gérardmer in the Vosges, St. Honoré les Bains in the Nièvre, St. Georges de Didonne in the Charente Inférieure, Quiberon in Morbihan, are several out of many. These charming little watering-places, now patronised by thousands, owe their rapidly-increasing prosperity to the railway.

The result of facilitated communication may be appreciated in another way. Twenty-five years ago our French neighbours were emphatically a stay-at-home people. The cost and fatigue of travelling post, the poor accommodation of out-of-the-way spots, and high railway tariffs accounted for this apparent want of enterprise.

Let us see what cheapened travel has done. In 1869 the number of railway travellers in France were 111 millions, in 1887 it had risen to 218 millions. Travel in France is, indeed, no longer the luxury of one class, but of all. Throughout the months of August and September, hotels, boarding-houses, lodgings, are full to overflowing. Even monks and non-cloistered nuns take advantage of the cheap return ticket. In certain regions we see many a rubicund Franciscan, many an attenuated Dominican on his vacation tour, whilst the second and third-class ladies' compartment



is sure to be crowded with nuns. Nor must we overlook the pilgrimage, holiday jaunt of the French working woman. Even peasants have their special spas, taking the waters regularly, and at a minimum of cost.<sup>1</sup>

Facilitated communication means cheapened transport, in other words, additional markets and quicker returns. The late M. Baudrillart in his exhaustive monograph on Brittany tells us how in former years Breton market gardeners disposed of their produce. Roscovites, wearing local costume, would themselves journey to Paris, sometimes on foot, sometimes by diligence, carrying their first-fruits with them, those unrivalled salads, asparagus, and artichokes that now reach London in a few hours. In 1875, when I visited St. Pol de Léon and Roscoff, the journeys had to be made from Morlaix by post or private carriage. The railway since constructed has immensely increased the activity of this region, land in the neighbourhood of Roscoff fetching from 12,000 to 16,000 francs per hectare.<sup>2</sup>

The goods train in France shows proportionate development. In 1869, 44 millions of tons were despatched; in 1887 the sum total had risen to 78 millions. These figures are irrespective of the parcels post established in 1881, and having, at the end of nineteen years, reached the sum of 19 millions of packages. I will here explain that the network of railways decreed in 1879, and covering an extent of 40,000 kilometers, is called the Réseau d'État. The six great lines already existing had been aided and partly constructed by the State. In accordance with the convention of 1859, Government loans were advanced for the

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. of this work, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> M. Baudrillart.

completion or laying down of lines, and to this association, which lasted twenty-five years, is due the rapid development of railways during that period.<sup>1</sup>

That alike agricultural and industrial returns should show similar increase is a foregone conclusion. Yet we must bear in mind that since the foundation of the Republic, France has not only paid 200 millions sterling to Prussia, the devastation of the phylloxera represents a similar loss, a third misfortune proved almost as ruinous, namely, the silk-worm disease. Happily arrested by M. Pasteur's discovery, this pest at one time threatened the very existence of the French silk trade. Nor was this all. A succession of bad seasons impoverished the farmer; a period of acute depression affected the industrial classes; in 1882 came the financial crisis, known as "Le krach."

Thus menaced, the French nation quietly and cheerfully plodded on, with what results the Budget of last year has told us. I here quote the *Daily News* of 18th May 1892:—

FRENCH FINANCE.—The Budget discussion of Monday in the House of Commons must seem almost a parochial affair to the reader of the latest Diplomatic and Consular Report. This deals with the almost unrealisable totals of the French Budget for 1892. It is forwarded by Lord Dufferin, as drawn up by Mr. Egerton. It shows by what extraordinary efforts the French are now advancing to an equilibrium of public finance. In the earlier years of the

<sup>1</sup> De Foville. I must here point out a curious inconsistency in a democratic country. In the matter of that boon—the third-class express—French companies are still unenlightened as the heathen. Will it be believed that till within the last year or two no second-class tickets by express were granted between Dijon and Paris? Between Lyons and Dijon you cannot even travel by first-class express without permission from the stationmaster!

present Republic, the Budget was almost as burdensome as that of Italy. Everybody asked for what seemed good in his eyes, and in too many instances the Government was obliged to grant it. Hence the nominal income, as raised by taxation, was but an item of the account, and a great deal of the expenditure had to be defrayed by loans. At the close of the war, France was in an almost unparalleled situation. She had not only to bear the enormous cost of her own defeat, but she was denied the ordinary resource of retrenchment. While paying interest on augmented debt on the one hand, she was incurring fresh debt on the other. A number of things had to be done at once. The surrender of Metz and Strasburg left the country without a military frontier, and a new one had to be made. The new fortifications required a new armament, and both together were but supplementary to the new army. This immense expenditure for possible war, again, was but a fraction of the inevitable outlay. Elementary education could hardly be said to exist, at the fall of the Empire. It has since been created in a way that might make scholastic France the envy of Europe. In fact, the only possible fault alleged against the work is that it has been done too well. Some of the schools are a trifle too magnificent for village needs. It is, however, a fault on the right side. This, again, was not the end. M. de Freycinet imagined a vast scheme of new roads, and new district railways, and of renovated and enlarged ports, harbours, and canals. Millions upon millions were borrowed for this purpose, and most of the money has been laid out. There is something to show for it, even to the ordinary traveller, at ports like Calais and Boulogne, and, to Frenchmen of course, throughout the whole extent of the territory. France may almost be said to have renewed her entire plant of locomotion since the war. These luxuries of progress cost money, and it was found at length that they cost more than even the richest country on the Continent was able to bear.

Ever since that discovery successive Finance Ministers, and M. Rouvier in particular, have been cutting down expenses. That minister, according to Mr. Egerton, has at length got rid of the extraordinary Budgets which were but additions to the Public Debt. A few years ago the extraordinary Budget of Public Works alone amounted to over 18 millions sterling, and the total expenditure outside the Budget to over 33 millions. This year the total expenditure is but something over three. 1883 was the worst year of Governmental extravagance. The departments were spending money with both hands. The value of the military plant alone is

now more than three times as much as it was during the closing years of the Empire, and the navy has three times as many guns as it had in 1870. As it is, and with all M. Rouvier's economies, the French Budget is a colossal affair. The total estimate for 1892 is over 152 millions sterling. In considering the significance of these figures, however, it must be borne in mind that a great many charges that we should consider purely local enter into the French general scheme. The Budget is centralised, like everything else. The mere interest on the public debt is nearly 51½ millions sterling. Still all this, as we have shown, has only to be contrasted with what has gone before to seem hopeful enough. Mr. Egerton sees every sign of still further improvement. "The preaching of M. Leroy-Beaulieu has not been in vain. The period of extravagance extending over ten years, when in time of peace £200,000,000 were added to the debt, is now passed. Elsewhere than in this rich country such extravagance might have been disastrous; but the benefits of much of this vast expenditure remain in the unsurpassed and commanding condition of the military force and defences, the gigantic public works, ports, railways, roads, and canals, and the educational establishments. Now that these works and preparations are terminated, no further lavish expenditure for any of these objects appears probable. Economy is the order of the day, and the diminution of the debt the aim. Meanwhile the price of Rentes, owing to the savings of the people, gradually rises; the Three per Cents are at 97, and promise to reach par." They were close upon 98 yesterday. These figures may be studied with profit on both sides of the Alps.

I also subjoin the following quotation from the same paper, which appeared somewhat later:—

French three per cents reached par to-day for the first time, new threes being quoted at 100.15. This is the most eloquent bulletin of victory for twenty years of Republican administration.

Figures even more suggestive are supplied by the Savings Bank. When we learn that within ten years, *i.e.* from 1880 to 1890, the sum total of the people's savings had doubled, that the amount of that sum total represents over and above the weight in silver of the Eiffel Tower,<sup>1</sup> viz. 7000 tons, or two milliards of francs, we

<sup>1</sup> *L'Épargne en France*, 1890.

dimly realise the progress of well-being in France. I say dimly, for as M. de Foville points out, a milliard is not easily to be grasped, not a milliard of minutes having in 1890 elapsed since the Christian era.

An enormous stimulus to saving was effected by the Post-Office Savings Bank, opened on the English plan in 1881. Ten years later, one out of every six French people possessed a savings' bank book. In some departments every third inhabitant is a depositor. As with us, deposits are awarded by way of prizes in communal schools.

By way of illustrating the moralising effect of children's savings, M. de Foville cites the following incident: The Director of the National Savings Bank of Lyons related how one day a wire-drawer came to him for the purpose of withdrawing thirty francs, the deposit of his little daughter. Here the father exercised his right, but in such cases it is usual to put a few inquiries. The wire-drawer explained that his wife had just died after a long illness, and that the child's savings were needed to defray the cost of burial. He did not add that these domestic troubles had led him into drinking habits. The director gave him the money, saying, as he did so, "Remember that this sum does not belong to you. You borrow it of a child who has earned, and deservedly, earned it. It is your duty to return the loan." Three months later the same workman reappeared, holding by the hand a little girl neatly dressed in black. Carefully counting the thirty and odd francs, he said, in a voice that trembled with emotion, "I now return my little Marie's deposit. I thank you, Monsieur, for the observation you made to me on the day of my wife's funeral. From that time I

have never once entered a cabaret, so anxious was I to repay the loan. And as I am determined to stay away for the future, I give you my word that as long as I get work, I will add a franc weekly to the child's book." This charming story displays the bright side of artisan life.

A population able to double its savings within a period unpropitious alike to commerce and agriculture, will naturally fare better, dress better, and live more comfortably than before.

Peasant proprietors and day labourers in Brittany nowadays eat white bread and butchers' meat, woollen underclothes replace the coarse homespun linen formerly general, shoes and stockings supplant sabots lined with straw.

Nothing more astonished Arthur Young a hundred years ago than the small quantity of meat consumed at French tables.

"Fair day," he wrote from Hasparren in the Pyrenees, "and the place crowded with farmers. I saw the soup prepared for what we should call the farmers' ordinary. There was a mountain of sliced bread, the colour of which was not inviting; ample provision of cabbage, grease, and water, and about as much meat for some scores of people as half a dozen English farmers would have eaten, and grumbled at their host for short commons."

But statistics show an advance in meat eating as in other things. Whereas in 1812 the annual quantity of meat consumed per head was only 17 kilogrammes, in 1882 it was 33 kilogrammes. We must remember that many small owners live largely on pork and poultry reared for their own use. In my first volume I

mentioned a remote Pyrenean village in which it was impossible to obtain a chicken for dinner. The peasant owners forming the community all reared poultry, but not for sale.

Post-Office statistics throw light on intellectual and social as well as material progress. A letter, for instance, implies two conditions: firstly, the capacity to read and write, secondly, the cost of paper, envelope, and postage stamp. Strange to say, France has not yet adopted a system of penny postage. Three halfpence is the tariff for all letters except those delivered in the town of posting. Between the years 1872 and 1887 the number of letters posted throughout the country had risen from 339 to 671 millions, these figures not including post-cards, circulars, and newspapers. We cannot, of course, expect statistics to teach us how large a proportion of missives was contributed by the working-classes. A glance at educational progress farther on will afford instruction on that head. So enormous an increase of correspondence has naturally stimulated the paper trade; no manufacture in France shows more rapid advance. The annual revenue derived from paper now reaches 120 millions of francs, 200 million kilogrammes being manufactured in 1890 as against 171 in 1883. Some vine-growing districts ruined by the phylloxera regained partial prosperity owing to the establishment of paper mills. The bulk of paper consumed in schools doubles that used in private correspondence.

Agricultural progress can only be appreciated by those who revisit rural districts after a few years' absence. Retrace our steps where we will, we find fertile regions made more fertile still, others completely transformed. Inch by inch, foot by foot, the Dauphinois peasant clothes

the Alps with verdure. Patient, indomitable, laborious he carries his boundary stones, hod of soil, mattock and spade, to every accessible slope, there creating a tiny field, patch of potato, corn or hay, perhaps several thousand feet above the level. With a determination equally uncompromising, a devotion I feel inclined to call equally pious, the Berrichon breaks up his newly-acquired bit of waste, plants rye, next clover, in three or four years turning another hectare or two into productive soil.

In Brittany, in the Vendée, in Anjou, the same process goes on. Scenes described by Arthur Young in the words, "Landes, landes, landes," now form one vast picture of fertility. Between the years 1860 and 1882 the entire superficies of waste throughout the country had diminished by one-third. The reduction goes on, and ever at an increased ratio. What the peasant is doing with his stocking full of silver, companies with their millions repeat on a large scale. The miasmatic swamps encircling Aigues-Mortes have become one vast vineyard, metamorphosis of little more than a decade. In the present volume I have described the no less amazing changes effected over against Mont St. Michel, a wide area of salt marsh turned into arable land and market garden. These *polders* as the drained, dammed-up farms are called, after the Dutch, show what is to be accomplished by the wholesale culture of vegetables.

Concerning rural progress generally, certain figures are sufficiently evidential. Take, for instance, the subject of machinery. Increased railway communication and facilities of transport, open markets have done much; but it is the improved methods thus brought within reach of French farmers that revolutionise



agriculture. Large districts remain as yet unvisited by the steam thresher, unenriched by chemical means ; new ideas are nevertheless making way. Thus within twenty years—1862-1882—the number of sowing machines had tripled, and of threshing, reaping, and mowing machines had doubled in France.

The use of artificial manures is steadily increasing, although in remote districts the process is slow. The creation of departmental professors of agriculture due to the Third Republic must be here mentioned.

Recruited from the agricultural schools of Gaud-Jouan, Grignan, and Montpellier, these State-paid professors have gone through a complete practical and scientific training, and exercise a real influence in rural districts. By means of classes in winter and open-air lectures in summer, they teach alike young and old. The summer conferences take the form of a lesson. New machinery, chemical compounds, seeds, plants, and roots are exhibited, inquiries invited and explanation given. When the more humane treatment of animals is taken in hand, it will doubtless be owing to their initiative.

Besides the great schools mentioned above, and that of forestry at Nancy, numerous supplementary establishments, having in view some special object, the school of drainage and irrigation at Quimperlé in Brittany, for instance, the farm school near Amiens, the schools for the culture of the vine elsewhere, and many others. The system pursued is that of Locke's maxim—Knowledge is seeing.

My opening chapters have dealt with high farming on a large scale in Artois, Picardy, and French Flanders. Here I was no longer amid peasant owners, but

gentleman farmers as in Norfolk or Lincolnshire. As has been seen in my narrative, I found farmers generally emphatic protectionists. Among the more cosmopolitan, that is to say, men whose views have been enlarged by travel, intercourse, and reading, protection is regarded in the light of a palliative, as such to be accepted cautiously. Whilst French agriculture has passed through severe ordeals within the period under review, the state of things very favourably contrasts with our own. What was the recent report of Mr. R. L. Everett, the enlightened and public-spirited member for Woodbridge, Suffolk, before the House of Commons? In an admirably lucid speech, 6th February 1893, he said: "The change for the worse which has come over agriculture is almost incredible. . . . For years and years, during the earlier time of my recollection, the bankruptcy of a farmer was a thing almost unknown.<sup>1</sup> But for the last fifteen years the industry has been steadily declining, and now many farmers, honest, industrious, careful men, have been reduced to beggary, and not a few of them, broken-hearted, have taken their own lives as the readiest means of escaping misfortune." Mr. Everett sees in bimetalism a remedy for this state of things; I refer the reader to his speech.<sup>2</sup> On the other side of the Manche agriculture saves itself by being a Jack-of-all trades.

A French farm is protean—able to take many shapes. Thus it may be a cider orchard, an enormous asparagus bed, a market garden, a dairy, a vineyard, a mulberry orchard, a sugar factory, a field of poppies, a simpling

<sup>1</sup> Certainly unknown in my native part of Suffolk at the time alluded to.

<sup>2</sup> Vacher. Westminster, 1893.

ground for druggist or perfumer. Stock-rearing and corn-growing, the corner-stones of English farming, are often relegated to a secondary place.

Thus in the foregoing pages I have described one large farm opposite Mont St. Michel, of which the stable product is asparagus, another in Picardy, on which cattle are kept solely as consumers of beetroot crushed for sugar; in Artois, apples are grown for German cider-brewers; under warmer skies we find a score of luxuriant crops on a single acre, the most flourishing peasant ownership existing where we least expect it, in corners of the proverbially poor Savoy!

When we turn from material to intellectual progress, surprises still more startling await us. English writers<sup>1</sup> have recently done ample justice to French education, primary and advanced. I will, in the briefest possible words, indicate the ground covered since the 4th of September 1870.

It is hardly necessary to mention that, up till the date of the Revolution, there was no budget of public instruction whatever. In his voluminous volumes lately published, the Duke de Broglie,<sup>2</sup> one of the warmest supporters of the *ancien régime*, admits this fact; but endeavours to prove that it was not needed, the clergy supplying the want, and the bishops selecting the schoolmasters. The Convention during its short régime, decreed a comprehensive system of primary instruction—lay, gratuitous, and obligatory, but the initiative was not followed up. Napoleon wanted food for cannon,

<sup>1</sup> See especially T. H. Teegan, *Elementary and Technical Education in France*, and Mrs. Sandford's article in *Macmillan*, June 1892.

<sup>2</sup> *La Révolution*, par le Duc de Broglie. Paris 1892. 2 vols.

not intelligent citizens. His successors showed no more enthusiasm in the subject, and the first law effectually carried out dates from 1833.

Under the Restoration the budget of primary instruction was 50,000 francs! In 1833, 8000 communes had no schools.

During the reign of Louis Philippe the budget rose to 3 million francs, and under the Second Empire it rose to 12 millions. In 1892 the Republic set apart for this purpose 168 millions.

The progress of elementary education may best be appreciated by other figures. Thus in 1866 the percentage of persons unable to read and write was 25 among men, and 41 among women. In 1882 the former percentage had dwindled to 13, the latter to 25.<sup>1</sup> In certain departments, those of the Indre and the Cher, for instance, two-thirds of its inhabitants in 1866 could neither read nor write. During my residence at Nantes in 1875-76, the notice "*Écrivain Publique*" would frequently meet my eyes. Indeed, the paid letter writer did most of the correspondence in country places. A very small proportion of the people could dispense with his services. M. Jules Simon, in his admirable little work, *Le Livre du Petit Citoyen*, thus describes the rural Brittany of his youth. "There were no schools anywhere. In order to find them you had to go to the towns."

In 1880 of the 56,000 communes of France, only 243 remained without primary schools.

Throughout the last twenty years the architect and the stone mason have penetrated remotest regions; alike in the lonely hamlets of the Morvan, the mountain

<sup>1</sup> Réclus, *Géographie de la France*.

fastnesses of the Lozère, the sylvan scenes immortalised by the great Sand, the melancholy Breton village, handsome schools have sprung up; year by year the ideal world of books is opened to larger numbers. The profession of scrivener is already obsolete. If white-haired patriarch or grandame cannot manipulate the pen, the little ones are at hand able to fulfil all behests. In the words of the great geographer of France: "Every year the sum total of the ignorant diminishes, children learn more than their parents did before them, the taste for reading spreads, newspapers become more numerous and necessary, public and private libraries are founded in every direction; learned societies have tripled within the last generation. Since the late war we seem dimly to have realised that a nation to be great must consist of individuals who think."<sup>1</sup>

But it is less to the numerical strength than the spirit of education in France that we must look for results.

The law of 1884, by shutting out incompetent candidates, revolutionised the teaching of the young. From that date, no one could undertake the office of schoolmaster or schoolmistress without a certificate of proficiency.<sup>2</sup> Children alike, of rich and poor, were protected from that cruellest of impostures, make-believe knowledge. The huc and cry raised in England against these measures of the Republic aptly illustrated the theological bias criticised by Herbert Spencer in his *Study of Sociology*. No one seemed for a moment

<sup>1</sup> Réclus, *Géographie de la France*.

<sup>2</sup> In 1883 more than half the communal schools for girls throughout France were held by nuns, two-thirds of whom held no certificate of capacity whatever.—É. RÉCLUS.

to realise that the point at issue was neither the priest's robe nor the nun's coif, but the educational endowments of the wearer. Had such certificates been exacted of the religious orders, but not of lay teachers, English writers could hardly have displayed more animus. The secularisation of national schools was a measure equally imperative.

It must be borne in mind that the Republic had here to protect the religious liberties of the minority, a minority barely one per cent of the total population. Whilst national schools are non-sectarian, education remains free. Authorised religious bodies may open schools wherever they please—the conditions being the scholastic diploma, suitable accommodation and attention to hygiene. Such institutions depend entirely upon donations. Pupils may pass the same examinations as those of the State schools, no other certificates being recognised.

I may here explain that non-authorised religious bodies are those who refuse to acknowledge the Republic—in other words, to comply with the conditions exacted of every corporate body. Their position is that of any association in England which should refuse to sign a Government charter. In a letter addressed to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, many years ago, Mr. Hamerton made this matter quite clear.

Between primary and higher education for the people yet remained a gap. ♣

By the law of January 1887, the *école primaire supérieure*, originated by Guizot, became a fact, and for once and for all bridged over the intellectual gulf dividing class and class.

Where the primary school leaves off, the upper

school, also lay, gratuitous, and open to both sexes, takes up instruction. The former fits a child for the battle of life, the latter for following commerce, science, literature, or art. No boy or girl can enter who has not passed the final examination of the primary school. The course of instruction lasts from two to three years, and embraces the following subjects: Book-keeping, geometry, algebra, modelling, designing, geometrical drawing, industrial and commercial geography, modern languages, music and singing, political economy and common law, French history and literature, also general history, more especially of modern times; science and natural history, with particular reference to agriculture; the industrial arts and hygiene. Boys are taught in addition mechanical engineering and carpentry; girls dressmaking. Botany, geology, and natural history are taught in summer by means of the *promenade scolaire* or school excursion organised during the summer months. Here, as in the class-room, rich and poor acquire knowledge side by side.

Teachers must be provided with the certificates required of all engaged in secondary education. Any town or commune contributing the necessary funds can open the *école supérieure*, which, ere long, will be found in every canton.<sup>1</sup>

I must now say a word on what has been achieved for the higher education of girls. Conformably with the educational Acts of 1880 and 1882, *lycées* or public day-schools for girls have been opened in the cities and larger towns throughout France. These *lycées*, which I described in my first volume, are not at all on the plan of our own high schools. The instruction afforded

<sup>1</sup> A canton consists on an average of thirteen communes.

is thorough as far as it goes, but by no means so comprehensive as that of *lycées* for boys. School examinations for both sexes, like our own junior local, will doubtless follow in time. Although a compromise, the *lycée* for girls is, however, an immense step in advance. The progress of technical education has been enormous.

In 1879 only 26 *écoles professionnelles* or technical schools existed throughout France. Already, in 1883, the number had risen to 400.<sup>1</sup> Hardly a town of any importance is now without one of these establishments. In his great geographical work, Réclus accredits Bordeaux with the first technical school opened in France for girls. This is an error. Already the initiative had been taken at Nantes by the late distinguished Dr. Guépin and his public-spirited wife. A committee was formed, donations flowed in, the municipal council supported the scheme, and in 1873 the school was in working order.

All classes were gratuitous, and the instruction offered was of two kinds, the first fitting pupils for the educational diploma, the second for industrial occupation. Painting on porcelain, velvet, silk, and ivory; designing for wall-papers, carpets, tapestry, and other fabrics; wood-engraving, dressmaking, lace-mending, were among the subjects taught. The Nantaise society for the technical training of girls, thus modestly inaugurated, is now an important organisation under State patronage.

Elsewhere, students of both sexes receive instruction under the same roof. We may safely aver that there is no subject, technical or scientific, artistic or literary, that young men and women may not acquire in France without a fraction of cost to themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Réclus, p. 922.



The effect of such widely-spread training of hand and eye is incalculable. In the least little thing French artisans strive to fulfil artistic conditions. They have ever before them a standard, an ideal. Thus it comes about that French productions are not cheapened from year to year. The price of an object must first and foremost cover the excellence of workman or work-woman.

Of progress in the higher fields of learning I must say a few words. As Sir W. Pollock recently pointed out, here the onward march has been very rapid. French intellect, he writes,<sup>1</sup> awakened from the nightmare of the Second Empire, has once more put forth all its strength, making good the proud motto of the city of Paris—*Fluctuat nec mergitur*.

The intellectual deadlock created under Napoleon III. by the alliance of Imperialism and the Ultramontane party is sufficiently indicated by two circumstances, the ostracism of Renan by the Collège de France, and of Littré by the Academy. When, indeed, Littré was received by the last-mentioned august body, Bishop Dupanloup resigned his seat.

A less-known incident throws further light on the state of affairs. So far back<sup>2</sup> as 1832, Auguste Comte had agitated the foundation of an additional professorship in the Collège de France, namely, that of the general history of science. Guizot, then Minister of Public Instruction, threw cold water on the scheme; for the time being, it fell through. The Second Empire proved more hostile to positive science than had been the monarchy. Even during the early years of the

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, November 1892.

<sup>2</sup> See *La Revue Occidentale*. Paris, September 1892.

Third Republic such an innovation was found impracticable.

In 1879 Littré revised Comte's proposition, but to no purpose. Five years later M. Dubost, member of the Commission of Public Instruction, pleaded eloquently for the new chair. "The Collège de France," he said, "remains closed to the teachings of modern science."

Still opposition was made. Not until 1891, after powerful advocacy on the part of the above-mentioned speaker and of M. Bourgeois, a Minister of Public Instruction, was the measure carried in the chamber by a large majority.

The new chair, founded by the President of the Republic in 1892, was bestowed upon M. Pierre Laffitte, head of the French Positive School.

In scholarship, advance has been enormous. Let the Germans look to their laurels, writes Sir W. Pollock, or French savants will have avenged Sedan after peaceful fashion before the century closes, and in good earnest!

On this head one of our foremost English scholars writes to me as follows: "You ask the names of some of the leading savants of France, in order to confirm my position, viz. that the Republic has been more favourable to a high standard of learning than previous forms of government. 'The 'Collection des éditions savantes des Classiques Latins et Grecs avec commentaires,' published by Hachette, are, in many respects, superior to the editions which emanate from German presses, both in scholarship and learning. The *Euripide* and *Démosthène* of H. Weil, the *Sophocle* of E. Tournier, the *Vergil* of E. Benoist, the *Homère* of A. Pierron, the *Thucydide* of A. Croiset, the *Tacite* of E. Jacob, are works which may be named in comparison with any

editions, past or present, and of any country. To these I may add the names of Alfred Jacob, Émile Thomas, J. Denis (author of *La Comédie Grecque*, 2 vols.), the two Croisets, A. Martin, E. Chatelain, R. Cagnat, S. Reinach, G. Boissier, Bouché-Leclercq, as having contributed in their several lines to the better understanding of the classics, and gained for themselves a European reputation."

It is surely unnecessary to relate what has been achieved by French savants and archæologists of both sexes in the East. The Salle Dicu-lafoy in the Louvre is one of the proudest monuments ever erected to the enterprise of a woman.

In science, let me merely enumerate a few facts and achievements. Among the foremost of these must be cited the foundation of the *Société Mathématique de France*, 1872; of the *Société de Géographie commerciale*, 1884; of agricultural chairs in every department; of the *Ligue du réboisement*, or organisation for replanting denuded tracts. Next must be mentioned the formulation and application of new sciences and branches of psychological research: *l'identité judiciaire*, or identification of criminals, due to M. Bertillon; *la démographie*, or comparative statistics, also M. Bertillon's work, *la grottologie*, or subaqueous investigation; *stratigraphie*, or the study of mountain systems; *l'organographie*, or microscopic study, etc. More familiar is the construction of the Suez Canal, of the Eiffel Tower, of the Observatory on the summit of Mont Blanc, work of an octogenarian, 1892. The applications of electricity, due to M.M. Desprez, Bréguet, and Bonelli, the geographical works of Réclus, the botanical researches of De Candolle, the scientific expeditions of Soleillet, 1886,

of the Abbé Debaize, 1880, the explorations of M. Martel, may well rank among the most brilliant achievements of our time. Here I must leave off, commending the reader to M. Rambaud's invaluable *Histoire de la Civilisation Contemporaine en France*.

The wide field of letters I cannot attempt here. That French literature of the day is not represented by Zola and his school, the following citation will testify. I quote from the admirable survey of actual writers by M. Reinach in the *Athenæum* for 30th June 1893: "The ethic, or to use a less pretentious word, the moral character of literature, is regaining importance. The most of our men of letters are writers with a thesis—even those who seem to sacrifice the least to the desire of proving a truth, and the most wayward allow themselves to be impressed by the serious problems of the moment. . . . The object of our best writers appears to be to teach men what one of them calls 'le devoir présent et l'action morale.'"

The best illustration of this thesis is the classic *matinée* or morning performance at the Comédie Française and the Odéon. Even in brilliant summer weather, Molière, Corneille and Racine attract enthusiastic audiences. Young and old, learned and simple, still weep over the *Athalie* or *Horace*. No such severe standard can be kept up here. Shakespeare must first and foremost be spectacular. He must have music, stage effects, dazzling costumes. The French public can dispense with all these.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now look at social progress. We have

<sup>1</sup> I add that nothing has ever so completely taken thoughtful French people aback as the reception accorded in England to Zola. Then, indeed, being in France at the time, I had to blush for my country-people.

seen that the condition of peasant and artisan steadily improves ; wages are higher than they were twenty-five years ago. All classes enjoy a greater amount of comfort and more opportunities of mental improvement. But is that burning question of our day, the relation of capital and labour, of employer and employed, nearer solution than on the close of the war ?

I have frequently noticed the contrast presented by industrial centres and purely agricultural regions, comparing, for instance, the artisans of the Jura with the peasant owners of the Seine and Marne. The working day of the former in 1878 was appallingly long, the one blot on a bright picture of thrift and independence. "The fabrication of watches at Montbéliard," I wrote, "is a curious process, the precision and apparent intelligence of the machines employed being as agreeable to contemplate as the reverse is humiliating, viz. the spectacle of men, women, and children being converted by unremitting mechanical labour into veritable automata. The working day consists of from twelve to fifteen hours, with intervals for meals, and the occupation is extremely unwholesome owing to the smell of the oil and the perpetual noise of machinery. The wages are from two to four francs a day." Again at St. Claude, seat of the turnery trade and of wood-carving, I found alike actual condition and outlook very depressing. All the best workmen were migrating to Paris, tempted by better pay and shorter hours. Strikes were out of the question, as no Trades Unions or other associations existed. A young artist, so we must call him, who worked at home, told me that he could only earn five francs a day and by dint of carving two dozen pipe handles.

At Thiers, in the Puy de Dôme, seat of the cutlery trade, I found matters hardly more cheerful—excessively long hours of labour, unwholesome surroundings, and no organisation to bring about improvement.

A bare outline of the great Labour movement in France would occupy too much space here; the reader is referred to the *Daily News*, January 1893, for full particulars of its latest and, as it seemed, most hopeful development, namely, the great Bourse du Travail, or Labour Exchange, opened in Paris under municipal auspices a few years back. This gigantic federation of working-men has for its objects the centralisation of workmen's syndicates, the discussion of all questions relating to employer and employed, the registration of workmen and workwomen wanting places, last, but not least, the suppression of all agencies.

The present Labour Exchange near the Place de la République was inaugurated in May 1892, and contains besides a large hall for general meetings, and an equally vast "salle de grèves" or hall for the meetings of men and women on strike, a number of bureaux apportioned to the various syndicates. The management is in the hands of a committee elected by the syndicates, and controlled by the Labour Commission of the Municipal Council. The original subvention of the municipality was 20,000 francs yearly, raised to 50,000. During the present year 100,000 francs was asked for, but a compromise made, 75,000 francs being accorded.<sup>1</sup>

How the system works may be gathered from the following account of the Nurses' Syndicate (*Daily News'* correspondent, January 1893):—

<sup>1</sup> *Journal des Débats*, 13th April 1893.

In Nos. 23 and 24, Second Floor, Bourse du Travail, a syndicate is established which would be noteworthy if for no other reason than that it is, for the present at least, composed of women. But it has other claims to consideration. It is the first Union of Nurses ever founded in France. Its founder—Madame Coutant—an ex-nurse, who has had personal experience of every department of her arduous profession, is a lady of remarkable ability and organising power. In the hospitals of Paris there are about six thousand nurses of all classes. Of the six thousand only 550 have joined the union; but then the union has only been a few weeks in existence, and new adherents are coming in day by day. The union has been founded for the purpose of changing the nurses' calling into a highly educated and trained profession, the members of which shall be fairly paid and properly treated. The new union is dead against the agencies—the old story. An agency has been known to pocket eight, ten, fifteen, or twenty francs a day from some patient whom it supplied, and to give the nurse two francs. "The agencies," says Madame Coutant, "care nothing for qualifications; they send broken-down coachmen and housemaids to act as nurses. Nor have the sisters belonging to the various religious societies, who have acted as hospital nurses—as in the Hotel Dieu—been ever properly qualified. The most they had to offer was their devotion and the consolations of religion. We want more. The wages of overseers in hospitals are ridiculously low—a pound a month, with board and lodging, for ordinary nurses; thirty-seven shillings a month, with the same, for overseer nurses; and twenty-eight, with the same, for assistant overseers. But then, we nurses are badly lodged and badly fed, and we are badly clothed." The name of the Nurses' Union is already known over France and Belgium; and requests for skilled nurses, for private families and public institutions, are constantly reaching the secretary (and founder) Madame Coutant. She has a list—steadily growing larger—of trained and certified nurses, ready to go anywhere at a moment's notice. She is the enemy of all Clerics who would use the profession of nurse for the stealthy purposes of their religion. Madame Coutant is a Socialist—that is to say, an Idealist; and the syndicate which she has founded is open to all, independent of race or creed. But the first steps to reform in this important profession were taken by a power even greater than Madame Coutant's Union. That power was the "City of Paris," the Municipality, which in 1878 established six schools for the training of nurses. The Right hated the project. But the Progressists (as you have already learned to say in London)

carried it, the Left arguing that the establishment of these schools was a "social obligation." These schools are under the direction of Dr. De Bourneville. According to the standard set forth in the syndicate's programme, every certificated nurse must be able to read doctors' prescriptions and to assist in surgical operations.

It will be seen that one satisfactory feature of this great movement is the elimination of the incapable. What is done in the case of nurses is done in all. The Labour Exchange exacts efficiency from those who register their names on the list of any syndicate. Idle, incompetent, untrustworthy workmen will not apply here a second time. The Federation therefore protects employers as well as employed.

The rapid spread of the movement is gathered from the Congress of Railway Servants held in April 1893. Forty-four thousand persons, incorporated in 102 sections, were represented by 92 delegates. Upon this occasion a cordial message was read from the amalgamated servants of Italian railways. The brotherly greeting was warmly cheered, and a response at once voted. Thus we find that not only does the Labour Exchange spread its ramifications throughout France, but throughout the ranks of working-men of other countries. No other organisation in the industrial history of our time has presented features so striking.

As I prepare these pages for press, I read in the daily papers that the Labour Exchange is closed "as a hotbed of sedition." The correspondent of the *Daily News* qualifies the assertion as follows: "All is quiet once more in the Quartier Latin.<sup>1</sup> Labour elements are on the scene, and no longer students. But they

<sup>1</sup> 6th July 1893. Grave disturbances had taken place between the students and the police.



are not likely to give much trouble. The real danger arises from the professional agitators, the gangs of prowlers and marauders who have merely transferred the scene of their operations from the Boulevard St. Michel to the Bourse du Travail."

The writer further explains the cause of such drastic measures. "It appears that among the Trades Unions having offices in this municipal building, were many who had failed to comply with the Act of 1884, on the incorporation of labour syndicates. Trades Unions have a great advantage in applying for incorporation, as it gives them legal existence, and a right of place in the Labour Exchange. A mere declaration before the proper authorities, with a copy of statutes, is the only formality required. Many Trades Unions have not sent in this declaration, but have nevertheless taken up quarters in the Bourse du Travail, allowed on sufferance by the Socialist Municipal Council." Hence the action of the Government and the recent conflict.

In spite of imperfect organisation among working-men hitherto, alike industrial and rural wages have steadily advanced throughout the country. Roughly speaking the wages of artisans have more than doubled since the early part of the present century.<sup>1</sup> Between the years 1867 and 1887, wages in certain trades, those of miners, for instance, have risen by a third. Naturally it is in Paris that we find the maximum of both rise and average. Thus, in 1885, a mason received 8 francs per day in the capital, just double the sum paid in the provinces, and double the wages of 1853!

The progressive rise of wages generally has been 54 per cent, of women's wages 68 per cent in the

<sup>1</sup> M. de Foville, *La France Économique*, 1890.

above-mentioned period. Agricultural wages between the years 1862 and 1882 had risen from 1.50 to 4 francs per day.

The history of strikes offers some interesting figures. Between 1874 and 1885 805 strikes took place, the average duration being 30 days in 1877, and 10 in 1883. Seven departments, viz. Nord, Seine, Rhône, Marne, Somme, Isère, Loire, show three-fifths of these strikes. Only 3 or 4 per cent of strikes generally are organised by women. Hitherto only one lockout of four has ended victoriously for the men. Even in successful struggles, as M. de Foville points out, the rise in wages very inadequately compensates for lost time. Of 100 strikes, 44 demanded higher pay, 22 were a protest against reduction, only 5 or 6 demanded shorter hours.

It will be seen that the lock-out has far from solved the great labour problem; recent occurrences at Carmaux and elsewhere may be described as insurrectionary movements, so determined the hostility displayed.<sup>1</sup>

The reader must not confound the anarchical party with the great Socialist movement, here resolutely asserting itself. No political body, no Government can afford to look askance at the enormous Socialist force, daily adding to its ranks. Its watchword of *Les Trois Huits*—eight hours' work, eight hours' repose, eight hours' recreation, so peacefully paraded at Roubaix last May day, implies much more than a radical change in the working-man's condition.

On the other hand, much is attributed to the Socialistic programme which finds no place there. As an

<sup>1</sup> *Our Home in Aveyron* (Blackwood) gives an admirable picture of life in a mining district.

able exponent puts it: "We have daily evidence that an absurd amount of false representations, of exaggerated fears, and of no less immoderate hopes, grows rankly in this field of inquiry."<sup>1</sup>

It is unfair, therefore, to judge this difficult question without careful and prolonged study. The eminent economist just named tells us that it took him years to familiarise himself with the Socialist scheme.

In the foregoing pages (Part I. p. 4) I described my interview with the Mayor of Roubaix—a man belonging to the working-classes, elected by the working-classes as chief magistrate of a town of 114,000 souls. I also narrated the celebration of May Day. Some idea will thereby be gathered of the nature of the new propaganda and its representatives.

I now pass on to another subject. The higher education of women naturally leads to their social advancement. Wider spheres of usefulness are offered to the sex in France than formerly, the result of tested education and proficiency. Such reforms were sorely needed. English readers will doubtless learn with surprise that the number of French nuns has tripled since the Revolution.<sup>2</sup> In 1889 there were 160,000 women in France who had taken the veil, a considerable proportion being cloistered—that is to say, shut up for life within four walls, their time given up to meditation and prayer. A few of these cloistered nuns only receive pupils who are condemned to the same prison-like existence. If too late the victim of

<sup>1</sup> *The Quintessence of Socialism*, from the German of Dr. A. Schäffle. Translated by B. Bosanquet, Sonnenschein. An admirable exposition of Socialism.

<sup>2</sup> Réclus, p. 920.

self-delusion contrives to escape, not a penny of her dowry is returned to her. She finds herself a social pariah and a beggar.

The spread of education will gradually diminish these numbers. In the meantime lay women are eagerly availing themselves of their new opportunities. Thirty years ago a woman physician in France as here was a rarity; at the present time qualified lady practitioners and students are numerous, many of the former holding Government or municipal appointments. Thus the chair of midwifery at the great *Maternité* hospital is occupied by a lady, a position equivalent to that of hospital physician; another lady was appointed medical officer to the Governor-General of Tonquin. This gifted woman, named Ribard, died in 1888; a third is visiting physician to the Lycée Racine for girls in Paris; a fourth is the officially-appointed medical attendant of the Grand Opera.

In other fields women are rapidly making their influence felt. Quite recently Mademoiselle Chauvin passed brilliant examinations in law. Many ladies are already employed in lawyers' offices; railway bookstalls are entirely managed by women in France, booking offices are very largely in their hands, whilst on some lines we even find station-mistresses. The enterprise and capacity of French tradeswomen is well known. They await a tardy act of justice, being still deprived of a privilege enjoyed by all licensed shopkeepers. This is the right of voting for the Tribunal of Commerce, by which are settled commercial questions and disputes.<sup>1</sup>

The Code Civil must be amended, and priestly

<sup>1</sup> See *The Englishwoman's Review*, No. 4, New Series.

influence lessened before the sex can attain the position enjoyed by our own countrywomen. In the eyes of the law they are still classed with minors, imbeciles, and criminals. A Frenchwoman, no matter her social status, fortune, or attainments, cannot witness a deed, execute a will, or act as guardian to children. As yet no Married Women's Property Act assures a French wife her earnings; small or great, they belong to her husband. Nor is this all. The law of divorce, ostensibly framed in the interest of both sexes, favours the stronger. Here not only is a modification of the law required, but of public opinion as dictated by the church. Devotee or formalist, the average Frenchwoman clings to ceremonial. She cannot unlearn the teachings of early youth,<sup>1</sup> and children born of parents civilly married are taught to regard themselves as under a ban. A Catholic lady, marrying a Protestant, is not permitted to go through the ceremony of her own Church before the altar; she must be married in the Sacristy! A young woman of irreproachable character who has accepted divorce as a refuge from unbearable treatment, must renounce a second marriage, or defy canons she has been taught to hold sacred. If, indeed, she re-marries, the contract, although the only one binding according to the law, in the eyes of society and her friends, remains an illicit connection.

Fortunately, in the first lady of France, the sex is admirably represented. The wife of the honoured President of the Republic, by her public spirit, her

<sup>1</sup> "Que doit-on penser des personnes qui ne sont unies que civilement?—Leur union n'est point un mariage; elle est criminelle devant Dieu parcequ'elle n'est pas faite selon les lois de l'Église."—*Catéchisme du Diocèse de Coutances*, Coutances, 1881.

untiring benevolence, her devotion to duty, has effected more for the advancement of her countrywomen than agitators and reformers. Few of us in England have the remotest conception of Madame Carnot's super-royal generousities, always dispensed in a strictly impartial manner, or of the arduous services undertaken by her for social or philanthropic ends. The presidential position had already been raised to high-water mark by the eminent mental and moral qualities of her husband; Madame Carnot's influence was only needed to render it epoch-making.

Having touched upon French law, let me point out another defect. Nothing answers to our courts of equity. The common law is supposed to provide for all emergencies. As a French lawyer writes to me: "Your system, I hold, is better calculated to meet exceptional cases, and provide for dilemmas brought about by human weaknesses or malversation."

A rich orphan, for example, who in England would become a ward of Chancery, is thus protected by French law: A family council is summoned, consisting of three next-of-kin on the paternal and three on the maternal side, in default of blood relations friends are chosen, a *juge de paix* or paid magistrate presiding. By these a trustee is appointed, in whom full authority is vested, and a sub-trustee, bound to see that such responsibilities are faithfully discharged.

The family council also decides cases of lunacy, their decision requiring the assent of a magistrate and doctor. Intestate or disputed estates handed over to trustees, called *séquestrés*, by ordinary tribunals; no tribunal is empowered to administer estates.

This legally-constituted authority, called the *conseil*

*de famille*, and constantly mentioned in French law,<sup>1</sup> is not in accordance with English notions. Such a check upon family life and individual action would be resented among ourselves. Not in a single case, but in all, French legislation puts the family first, relegating the units composing it to a secondary place. The Code Civil may be likened to the patriarch in the fable, inculcating the principle, Union is Strength, by the tying up of the faggot. Herein lies the secret of French solvency and wealth, not unseldom also, of narrowness in social circles. Facilitated travel, international literature, cosmopolitan intercourse, are changing all this; no more in France than elsewhere do excellent men and women now live and die in the family circle, never once having emerged from it mentally or geographically. And things are changing far more rapidly than most of us imagine. There remain other aspects of French social life on which I must say a few words, the humanitarian, for example.

All well-wishers of France would naturally rejoice in the utter failure to establish bull-fights in the capital. The bulls, furnished at his own cost by a French nobleman, were lately sold at a tremendous loss, the *picadors* and *toreadors* sent back to Spain, and the entire paraphernalia, decorations, costumes, trappings, sold by auction at nominal prices.<sup>2</sup>

That the barbarous Spanish sport never really appealed to the Parisian population, the following story will testify. A personal friend of my own, a young Englishman, entered a tramway returning from the arena. Later, a lady came up. Every place was now occupied, but a workman in blue blouse immediately jumped up, saying—

<sup>1</sup> See any manual of *Droit usuel*, or common law.

<sup>2</sup> The *Daily News* gave full particulars of this sale, 1893.

"First, tell me, madame, do you come from the bull-fight?"

She replied in the affirmative, whereupon he reseated himself with the retort—

"Then you shall not have my place. It is not becoming in a woman to behold such spectacles!"

Inefficacious as is the Loi Grammont for the prevention of cruelty to animals, there are yet signs of improvement in this respect. New companies have been established in Paris with the result that cab and cart-horses are in better condition and better treated than formerly. A new and wholly unlooked-for providence of the animal world has also arisen in quite other quarters. Mr. Max Müller, in his admirable exposition of Theosophy,<sup>1</sup> tells us that there are now 20,000 so-called "Christian Buddhists" in Paris. Without entering into the subject of Buddhism, let me here mention this phase of it which is deeply interesting to all humanitarians. The statement was made to me by a French physician in full practice, himself a follower of the new religion, and an opponent of vivisection.

As Mr. Hamerton points out in his work, *French and English*, animals fare no better at the hands of science than of superstition. The bacteriologist cuts up even the noble dog alive, inoculates it with the most horrible diseases, and in fine, regards the torturing of sentient beings as his privilege. The Italian peasant who plucks his fowls whilst living will excuse himself on the plea that an animal is no Christian. A French priest to whom I once appealed on behalf of tortured animals in Brittany, coolly replied, "Madame, excuse me, cruelty to animals is no sin." But the nineteenth-century Buddhist as well

<sup>1</sup> See the *Nineteenth Century*, May 1893.



as the Positivist,<sup>1</sup> not only forbids inhumanity in general, but inhumanity professedly in the cause of science.

May these new creeds then prosper on French soil and elsewhere! I am assured that the horrors of the laboratory and veterinary school are disapproved by a certain section of younger medical men in France, and that even an anti-vivisection league may ere long be looked for on the other side of the water, and recruited from professional ranks.

Here, too, it may be mentioned that in the manuals of civic and moral duty prepared by laymen and laywomen for elementary schools, the duty of humanity to animals is now strongly inculcated. I also refer the reader to M. Rambaud's work above mentioned, vol. iii. p. 611, "Une branche nouvelle de la morale." What is wanted, and what doubtless will come ere long, are cart-horse and donkey parades, children's bands of mercy, and, above all, local officers charged with drastic enforcement of the Loi Grammont.

Among social influences must be mentioned those that fall under the head of Anglo-French or insular. Whilst our legislators have adopted the County Council and the parliamentary closure, whilst our educationalists are waking up to the advantages of technical education as diffused throughout France, our near neighbours are emulating us in athletic training and many other matters hitherto regarded by them as eccentricity. Did we not lately see English oarsmen vanquished by French rivals on the other side of the channel, French football players contesting the prize here, the most perfect good-nature prevailing on both sides?

As a writer lately expressed himself in the *Daily*

<sup>1</sup> See the *Positivist Review*, January, February 1893.

*News*: "We must be prepared for new generalisations as to French manners. The old conventions of caricature will no longer serve."

The "Jack Frenchman" of Walter Scott and Captain Marryat are now being supplanted by living acquaintance. We are no longer "magnificently hated," as Thackeray wrote, by our French neighbours. Politics from time to time arouse vindictive feelings, which journalists certainly help to intensify. Anglo-Saxon relations nevertheless continue to improve.

Cheap travel has undoubtedly contributed to this result. Fifty years ago a trip to Paris was the privilege of the rich, or at least well-to-do. At the present time it is enjoyed by all classes. Tens of thousands of small shopkeepers, clerks, and artisans visited the Centennial Exhibition of 1889, returning, we may be sure, with modified views of France and French character. May we not hope the same of the pacific French invasions now become matter of every day? At the same time we had the pleasure of welcoming the Comédie Française at Drury Lane, the Société Nautique de la basse Seine at Henley; the French Archæological Society at Hastings? May all these be but the inauguration of a new era?

Under such circumstances, friendliness and sympathy are certainly more likely to increase than at any former period of our history. And if this better understanding is desired by a very large section of my country people, I may aver the same of our neighbours. Amicable relations with England are wished for, and cultivated as far as individuals in France are concerned.

I will here quote from the letter of a thoughtful and instructed Frenchman, retired notary, and large landowner in the south-west: "We French do not at

all understand our English neighbours, a misfortune for both nations, differing essentially in qualities and endowments, but worthy of mutual esteem. On one point they are certainly agreed, namely, on the necessity of representative government, hence their deep attachment to Liberal institutions, fruit of tremendous efforts and sacrifice. France and England being thus placed, by virtue of their liberties, their literature, science, arts, and commerce, in the vanguard of nations, any conflict between them would not only prove the greatest possible calamity to each severally, but would retard the march of civilisation by several centuries. I am far from fearing such a catastrophe ; it is nevertheless clear that to further the good understanding of two nations so great and enlightened, is to further the cause of progress generally. We must, at all costs, avoid petty quarrels and ignoble misunderstandings, and to our very utmost encourage international intercourse by means of syndicates, associations, festivals. The better we get acquainted with each other, the greater will become our mutual esteem, and from esteem to friendship is but a step. It is on these grounds that I warmly advocate the projected Channel Tunnel or Bridge. The realisation of project so grandiose would do more for the cause of European progress generally than all the Triple Alliances and armaments in the world."

The writer has never visited England, or had relations with English people. His views are perfectly disinterested and candid.

I only add that if I have in the smallest degree contributed to this end, that is to say, to a better understanding of French and English, I shall be more than compensated for my labours in French fields.

## APPENDIX II

### NOTE 1, p. 19.—CORN AVERAGES

M. RÉCLUS (*Géographie de la France*) gives the following averages of wheat in France and England: In France 15 to 17 hectolitres per hectare (hectolitre or setier 22 imperial gallons or  $2\frac{5}{8}$  Winchester bushels). In England 18 to 25 hectolitres.

But as Mr. Barham Zincke points out (*Fortnightly Review*, 1878), that the yield in France is less per acre than the total yield in England when rightly considered, is a demonstration not of the inferiority but of the superiority of “la petite culture.” “We only cultivate wheat on land that nature has well adapted for that grain, but the French cultivate it on all kinds of soil, on some of which it would originally have been impossible to cultivate it, and which nothing but the spade and the mattock of the peasant proprietor working for himself and on his own land, could have made capable of producing it. If this system enables large districts, in fact a considerable portion of the whole country, to yield crops of wheat and of other kinds of produce, which otherwise would have yielded little or nothing at all, it is no argument against peasant proprietorship that the

yield of these districts lowers the average yield of the whole country."

NOTE 2, p. 47.—HIGH-FARMING MADE TO PAY

1. On an occupation of 300 hectares the annual consumption of coal by machinery is 160 tons.

2. Such an occupation supports 150 head of cattle in winter, 80 in summer. 54 horses (breeding horses and others), 400 sheep in winter, 250 in summer. 50 pigs (for fattening).

3. The average yield of corn is 33 hectolitres per hectare, the hectare 2.4711 English acres.

4. The rent of land varies according to quality and situation. Thus, near large beetroot sugar factories, the value of land rises from 40 to 50 per cent.

Ordinary farms, that is to say, land growing corn, roots, clover, and hay necessary to the stock kept, rents as follows:—Best land, 150 francs per hectare; inferior, 100 per hectare; and unproductive land from 60 francs per hectare, down to 15. Rich pasture lands fetch a rent of 280 francs per hectare (over £5 per acre).

NOTE 3, p. 71.—TOBACCO GROWING  
IN FRANCE

The culture of tobacco was a State monopoly under the *ancien régime*, and at the present time constitutes a most important revenue. This State monopoly includes both the production and sale, and also regulates growth; only twenty-two departments enjoy the privilege of growing this plant. In accordance with the law of 21st

December 1862, not a leaf can be sold except to the State and at a price fixed by the State beforehand. Twenty-one tobacco manufactories exist throughout, many women being employed especially in the manipulation of cigarettes. Bureaux de Tabac, those dingy little shops in which cigars, tobacco, and postage stamps are sold, are State privileges accorded to widows of officers and meritorious officials, to whom they afford an income not under 1000 francs, or £40 per annum. The profitableness of this monopoly may be gathered from the following figures. Within the 75 years ending 1880, the sum total poured into State coffers reached 13 milliards of francs, the clear profit being 10 milliards, or double the amount of the war indemnity of 1871.

French people, put together, now spend in a single year no less than 400 millions of francs, the indulgence in pipes and cigars being steadily on the increase. In some regions the annual consumption is much larger than in others; the department of the Nord shows the maximum, that of the Lozère, the minimum (see *La France Économique*, "Tabac").

#### NOTE 4, p. 72.—BEE-KEEPING OR APICULTURE

The extraordinary attention paid to bee-keeping in France was attested by the interesting "Exposition des Insectes" (Insect Exhibition), held in Paris under official auspices two years ago. Here were shown specimens of every object connected with bee-keeping, models of hives, implements, and apparatus, living bees from Algeria, Cyprus, Palestine, and elsewhere, honey

producing plants (*plantes mellifères*), with wax, honey, and its numerous products, hydromel, eau-de-vie, white wines, gingerbread or *pain d'épice*, and remedial compounds, lozenges, and syrups, etc. The most suggestive section was that under the head of "Enseignement" or instruction, in great measure the contribution of national schoolmasters.

Whatever may be said of red tapism in France, there is no doubt that French national education is more practical than with us. Here, for instance, were maps, diagrams, models, the entire science of bee-keeping made an object lesson. A boy or girl of thirteen issuing from the communal school would thus have learned the management of a bee-hive in all its details. On Locke's great principle, "Knowledge is seeing," the objects in question would be shown, not merely talked of. Most interesting were the specimens of scholars' exercises and work.

The profits of honey have been diminished of late years by the tremendous production of beetroot sugar. Thus, whilst in 1882 there were 1,974,559 bee-hives throughout France, in 1887 statistics showed a certain falling off. Bee-keeping will naturally be most cultivated in flower-producing regions, the Dauphiné for instance. In the Isère alone, 137,982 kilos of honey were produced in 1889 (see *L'apiculteur*, 1891, Joanne, de Foville, before quoted).

#### NOTE 5, p. 97.—LYONS SILK

The museum attached to the Technical School of Roubaix bears out my remark.

Here are albums containing specimens of the choicest productions of Lyonnais silk-weavers. The patterns

thus preserved are indeed works of art,—brocades, lustres, glacés, moirés, shot and embossed silks and satins, all showing the highwater mark of taste, skill, and finish. These squares of silk and satin, neatly pasted in handsomely bound albums, form indeed a picture-gallery, not only appealing to manufacturers and those concerned in technical training, but to all admirers of sumptuousity and refinement in the domestic arts and in dress.

#### NOTE 6, p. 103.—PROGRESS OF ROUEN

From the *Times*, September 1892 :—

THE COMMERCIAL GROWTH OF ROUEN.—The British Consul at Rouen, in a recent report on the shipping and harbour improvements there, remarks that while most English people know Rouen as a picturesque and interesting old Normandy town, few remember that it is one of the leading French ports, which has taken its present position during the past 20 years. Between 1869 and 1871 the average tonnage entering the port yearly was 573,746 ; between 1889 and 1891 the average was 2,006,543, so that the shipping has quadrupled in 20 years, and no other French port can show an equally rapid increase. The average size of the vessels frequenting the port has increased threefold ; 20 years ago a ship drawing 16 feet would only venture to ascend the Seine during spring tides, while now the ships have much greater draught and can enter at neap tides, owing to the vast improvement in the navigable condition of the Lower Seine. In former days cargo intended for Rouen was usually discharged into smaller vessels at Havre, but now ocean-going steamers start direct for Australia and America, and return to Rouen. The reasons for these great changes are the importance of sending bulky and heavy articles, of which the imports of Rouen chiefly consist, by water in place of by rail ; the great improvements of late years in the inland waterways of France generally, which have enhanced the position of Rouen as a collecting and distributing centre ; the works on the Seine between Rouen and Paris which have made the former more and more the port of the capital ; and, finally, the favourable position of Rouen as the centre of an active manufacturing district, as well as of a network of railways to North,



West, and Central France. During the period in question the area of the harbour has been largely increased, as well as the length of quays for loading and discharging ; covered sheds and warehouses, appliances for dealing with cargoes, slips for the repair of vessels, special petroleum and timber basins have either been provided for the first time or have been increased ; the river below the town to the sea has been dyked, dredged, lighted, and buoyed, and an efficient pilotage service has been organised. Corresponding improvements in the estuary of the river have been impeded by the rivalry of Havre. This has especially been the case in regard to the proposition made on behalf of Rouen to carry the present system of training walls farther out to sea. In consequence of the contest between the two towns, which has been raging for 20 years, no permanent works of importance have been executed in the estuary, except an alteration in the direction of the northern training wall, which admits the flood tides more freely into the river. The cost of the various works to Rouen is estimated at about 2 millions sterling.

#### NOTE 7, p. 110.—CIDER

Cider is a far more important article of consumption in France than we imagine. In the three provinces of Picardy, Normandy, and Brittany, people of all classes drink little else, and since the invasion of the phylloxera, cider-making has been introduced elsewhere. It is now made in no less than 60 departments ; and, as I have mentioned in my account of the Pas-de-Calais, cider apples are exported from that department to Germany.

Apple-crops of course depend upon the season, and we consequently find cider a very fluctuating product, in some years double the quantity of others being produced. Thus, whilst in 1883, 23 millions of hectolitres were produced, the following year showed returns of just a half. As cider is principally made for home consumption, the farmer not only loses his money but

his year's beverage. Cider is supposed to prevent gout and rheumatism, and certainly the splendid physique of the northern population of rural France speaks highly for its hygienic properties. Its cheapness is of course the first recommendation. Whilst in 1888 a hectolitre of wine (*vin ordinaire*) fetched 50 francs wholesale and 80 francs sold to the retailer, the price of cider was, respectively, 13 and 22 francs (De Foville). We are here speaking of the kind made for sale. The cider mixed with water and drunk by grower and workpeople, is infinitely cheaper.

#### NOTE 8, p. 115.—TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

SIR—It is with no little reluctance that I take up my pen to criticise France and the French people, but I think I shall hardly be accused of an unsympathetic attitude to either by any readers familiar with my works. I feel it, however, my duty to protest, and in strong terms, against the treatment of animals as lately witnessed by myself in Normandy. The *Daily News* is widely read in Paris. I write in the hope that this letter may come under the notice of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, whose headquarters are in the capital. I travelled from Rouen to St. Lô in August last during a spell of torrid heat, the thermometer on the 21st registering 52 degrees Centigrade at 2.30 P.M. On the way we encountered many cattle-trucks bound for the Paris markets, some of these shunted—who knows for how many hours in the broiling sun—others slowly proceeding to their destination. The bullocks were fastened by their horns to iron hooks on the outside of the truck, and in such a way that they could not move the fraction of an inch. In this position and with barely standing-room, these unfortunate animals are packed for long journeys, with what results I shall now show. The day after reaching my destination, *chef-lieu* of the department of La Manche, I had occasion to cross the market-place. It was fair day, and sheep and cattle were being driven to and fro to the railway-station. Here a horrible spectacle met my eyes. A splendid ox, owing to the above-mentioned custom of being tied by the horns to iron hooks on the outside of the truck, had lost a horn, either by

carelessness or brutality, the horn had been wrenched clean off, only the bleeding stump remaining. I hope and believe that in England such a sight would have roused public indignation, that at least some passer-by would have consigned the drover to the police station. Will it be believed that not a soul in the crowded thoroughfare moved a finger or so much as uttered an exclamation of disgust? The poor, patient creature, with its bleeding stump, marched on, its martyrdom not nearly over as will be seen presently. This incident was not the only one calling for summary enforcement of the law in Gramont. Whichever side I turned I met heartsickening spectacles. Not many weeks before one of our London magistrates had sentenced a brutal drover to seven days' imprisonment for cruelty to a lamb. Lambs and calves are here handled precisely as if they were sticks and stones. The fashion in Normandy of driving a calf to market is as follows: Its fore-legs are tied together by a rope and thus hampered in its movements, it is expected to prove docile under kicks, blows, and, above all, a perpetual twisting of its tail. More surprising, perhaps, than such brutality is the indifference of the public and the apparent unconsciousness of the offender. I went up to a well-dressed, pleasant-faced farmer, accompanied by wife and child, thus torturing a calf, perhaps six weeks old. My remonstrance evoked a look and exclamation of profound astonishment. "I am not hurting the calf," he said; at my entreaty, however, leaving its tail alone.

But what avail the observations of a spectator amid such scenes, scenes, too, of daily occurrence? The only remedy lies in active local centres of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Cruel overcrowding and overpacking are evils, one would think, that must correct themselves, the loss being so great; yet at the very time I write of, the *Daily News* correspondent mentioned the fact of several hundred head of cattle and pigs arriving at the Villette markets dead from suffocation. That poultry should ever arrive in any other condition is a wonder. I have seen at another Norman town live ducks packed in hampers closely as pickled herrings, and allowed to remain thus for hours in the broiling sun before despatch to the railway station. It suited the convenience of the owners to send them to town at that particular hour, and nothing else is taken into consideration. Were public slaughter-houses conducted on humane principles our strictures might end here as far as animals destined for the butcher are concerned. I fear that inspection of these magnificent-looking buildings would lead to cruel disillusion. In certain Norman towns I am assured on the best authority that

oxen are still slowly bled to death, as calves used to be in England. The butcher bleeds the animal till it drops down, and the horrible process is continued when it revives. Is the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty in Paris cognisant of these facts? If so, how can we account for such a state of things? In my work *A Year in Western France*, published so far back as 1876, I drew attention to the revolting cruelties witnessed at Breton markets and fairs. I was warned by an English lady resident at a favourite watering-place of the Côtes du Nord against too sanguine expectations of improvement. "You will find enormous changes," she said, "but not in this respect. Our little colony of English here have tried vainly to form a branch of the Paris Société Protectrice des Animaux. The chief obstacle has been the indifference of our well-to-do French neighbours. We dropped the scheme, finding it impossible to enlist the general sympathy." My intention is to revisit Brittany next year, but meantime I prefer to make known these experiences in one of the most prosperous and most advanced regions of France. I add that during two weeks' stay in Normandy I witnessed more cruelty and hardness to the dumb world than during months, nay years, of residence in other parts of the country—I omit, of course, the treatment of cab horses in Paris, which during the year of Jubilee, 1889, was a disgrace to humanity, and which evoked a chorus of protests from English and American visitors. The amiability, the generosity, the innate kindness, and chivalry of the French character are appreciated by none more warmly than myself. Such contradictions as these just pointed out need not astonish us any more than the revelations of Mr. Waugh's society for the protection of children amongst ourselves. Just as it required a vigorous arousing of public opinion to establish the now dreaded tribunal of Harper Street, so on the other side of the Channel, when once general indignation is awakened, animals will be protected not only by the letter but by the arm of the law.—I remain, sir, yours obediently,

M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.

#### NOTE 9, p. 134.—ELECTORAL CATECHISMS

See work cited on p. 322.

#### NOTE 10, p. 140.—POLDERS

"Polder, in the Netherlands, is land below the level of the sea or nearest river, which, originally a lake or river,

has been drained and brought under cultivation. An embankment, forming a canal of sufficient height to command a run towards the sea or river, is made, and when carried quite round, as in the case of the Haarlem lake, it is called the *Ringvaart*. At one or more points on the embankment, apparatus for lifting water is placed, and worked by steam or wind power. If the lake deepens towards the centre, several embankments and canals are necessary, the one within the other, formed on different levels as the water surface becomes lessened, a connection being maintained with the outer canal which secures a run for the drainage water. 'The polders of the Netherlands are very numerous' (Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, 1893).

NOTE II, p. 173.—PROGRESS IN BRITTANY

For those unfamiliar with the Brittany of twenty years ago, Joanne's guide of that date is invaluable. We also find the excellent maps appended to these guides of very great service. Take, for example, the *Itinéraire de la France (Bretagne)* of 1873. The map shows us dotted lines indicating projected railways between Pontorson and Lamballe, continuation of the line from Cherbourg to Brest, between Nantes, Chateaubriant and Laval, between Nantes and Paimbœuf. Many branch lines that have opened new regions to the tourist and called into existence new holiday resorts had as yet not been thought of.

Let us now turn to the maps of recent editions. In every direction we see a network of railways with branch lines to the coast. Thus Quiberon, Concarneau, Pont

l'Abbé, Roscoff, Lannion, and many other beautiful spots formerly reached by carriage or diligence only, have become accessible and of course popular. Numerous resorts, Quiberon and Morgat, for instance, owe their present prosperity to the railway. Twenty years ago they were mere names in travellers' handbooks. At the present time, in the height of the season, it is difficult to procure a lodging. Every hotel, villa, and furnished room is monopolised by French tourists. And the faster new watering-places fill, the faster visitors flock to them. Even during the year 1893, whilst cholera was carrying off dozens of victims a day in Finistere, French holiday-makers were making the round of Breton travel as usual. I must not forget to mention the new French strategic railway between Brest and St. Renan, just inaugurated. This line was made with the double object of opening the country and defending the points on the north-west coast where an enemy's squadron might land troops. Another short line from Brest to Le Conquet is in course of construction.

With the laying down of railways and the cultivation of waste lands, wolves are fast disappearing. A generation ago the forests of Brittany were infested by wolves, which even Government premiums could not put down. At the present times wolves are chiefly found in the forest of Hunaudaye near Lamballe. Up till the year 1882, six francs were paid for a wolf, twelve for a female, since that time the reward has been raised to ten and fifteen francs respectively. Whilst in 1885, 1300 francs were paid in rewards, in 1892 only two were claimed. These figures, supplied me by a professor of agriculture, show that the wolf will ere long be a survival.

Much interesting information as to agricultural progress may be gleaned from publication of the Agricultural Society of the Côtes du Nord. Thus it is gratifying to find that in the matter of small birds, agricultural progress and humanity go hand in hand. In the Society's Bulletin of May 1892, I read a strong protest against bird-nesting and the capturing of nestlings. As many small birds are very serviceable in eating worms, laws have been passed for their protection, and schoolmasters are particularly enjoined to make this clear to their scholars. The following is one of the first spelling lessons given to little boys : "Ne—dé—ni—chez—pas—les—nids—des—petits—oiseaux—il—y—a—une—a—mende—pour—ceux—qui—le—font."

Let us hope that humane treatment of animals generally now inculcated as a duty in lesson books, will gradually wear that aspect. For the most part French peasants are cruel from thoughtlessness ; at least such is my belief. It is as difficult for them to realise the cruelty of knocking about young calves as for certain Englishmen to realise the inhumanity of sport so-called.

The immense quantities of buckwheat grown in the Côtes du Nord must not be accepted as a sign of poverty or poor culture. As is pointed out in another number of this publication, the *blé noir* or buckwheat is rather a sign of increasing prosperity. Buckwheat is the precursor of choicer crops ; the beautiful crimson sheaves that brighten the landscape in autumn rise upon the wastes of yesterday. No other crop so readily takes to newly broken-up soil, none other, in rustic phrase, so completely takes care of itself ; very little outlay in manure is necessary to produce a good harvest, and its uses are manifold. The grain fetches a ready

sale, the flour made into galets furnishes a nutritive article of diet, the blossoms attract multitudes of bees, 72,000 hives in the department producing honey and wax to the value of nearly a hundred thousand francs. Flax also, a time-honoured crop, is now assiduously cultivated in the Côtes du Nord. Sea-weed or *varech* forms an excellent manure for this plant, which especially flourishes by the seaboard. The best seed is exported from Russia. A multifarious and luxuriant culture now replaces the wastes and dismal routine of former days; "husbandry not much further advanced, at least in skill, than among the Hurons," wrote Arthur Young in 1788. Wheat, barley, oats, rye, hemp, even tobacco, testify to enormous agricultural strides. Equally eloquent is the improved breed and appearance of horses and cattle. Within the last twenty years advance here has been very great. The small farmer and cottager not only fare better themselves, but are able to feed their animals more generously. Whilst much remains to be done in matters of sanitation, cleanliness, and comfort, only those who knew the Brittany of former days can appreciate the progress already affected. If the spinning-wheel must now be sought in the *bric-à-brac* shops, and local fêtes have lost much of their picturesqueness and brilliancy, we are consoled by the universal signs of increased well-being and enlightenment.

With regard to primary education the following figures are suggestive. No less than 57 boys' schools and 54 girls' schools have been opened in the Côtes du Nord alone since 1874, *i.e.* the last twenty years, bringing up the total respectively to 335 and 345.



## NOTE 12, p. 232.—MARSEILLES AND LIVERPOOL COMPARED

Some readers may like to compare the first English and French seaports. I take the following figures from Chambers's *Encyclopædia* (latest edition), Joanne and Réclus.

Marseilles is entered annually by 8247 vessels of 4,633,052 burden, of this commerce nearly three-fourths being French, the British one-seventh. The tonnage of Liverpool in 1889 was 9,231,000. The imports and exports of the French port reach an annual value of from 65 to 70 millions sterling. Liverpool figures for about one-fifth of the imports, more than two-fifths of the exports and nearly one-third of the foreign trade of the United Kingdom. Of 145 millions of breadstuffs imported in 1888, 28 millions came through Liverpool. Liverpool in the same year shipped £46,342,000 of cottons out of a total of £71,986,000, and £9,232,000 out of £25,000,000 of woollen goods. Marseilles exports larger quantities of soap than any other place in the world; other important exports are flour, sugar, wine and spirits, silks and haberdashery, furs and skins, also pickled sardines, olives and olive oil. The dock accommodation of Marseilles is 340 acres, whilst Liverpool counts 1000 acres of dock accommodation. The warehouses of the former city, erected by a private company at an outlay of a million sterling, are the finest of the kind in Europe. In point of site, beauty, and climate, the French seaport of course has immensely the advantage. Liverpool is much better off in the matter of railways and railway stations. Of the seven railways

converging at Liverpool, four have handsome passenger stations. It seems incredible, but it is true that Marseilles has only one railway station and only two lines of railway, exclusive of the Ceinture. Till within recent years no line communicated directly with Aix and the valley of the Durance.

No line connects Marseilles with Turin and northern Italy. Of all great European cities, the foremost seaport of the Mediterranean is the worst off in this respect.<sup>1</sup>

Marseilles is still at the mercy of the Paris-Lyons-Méditerranée, a monopoly whose tyranny it will not easily shake off. As I prepare these notes for press I read the following in the *Daily News* :—

The Bartissol Bill for the construction of a canal from the Gironde to the Mediterranean was distributed to-day to members of the Chamber. It is to sanction a scheme which M. de Freycinet greatly favoured. The proposed canal will be about 328 miles long and 143 feet wide, except at points where vessels can pass each other, where it will be over 200 feet. The depth will be 27½ feet, and there will be 22 double locks. This canal is to have one terminal point west of Bordeaux, and after girdling that city will run parallel to the Garonne for 53 miles on a level plane. At Castet it will cross the mouth of the lateral canal of the Garonne, where technical difficulties will commence. Next it will traverse that river and follow its right bank in a parallel course as far as Toulouse, beyond which it will cross a second time and then a third time. There will be a great shunting station in the plain of Toulouse on the way to Narbonne. The canal will go through the cols of Naurousse, Castelnaudary, Carcassonne, Moux, and Montredon, and be independent of the railway and the Canal du Midi. A concession of 99 years is asked by a company prepared to carry out the scheme, and a State guarantee of two per cent interest. The military advantage would be to afford a safe passage to French ships in time of war between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

<sup>1</sup> See E. Réclus, p. 311.

It remains to be seen whether the P.-L.-M. will tolerate such encroachments.

We may conceive that one railway station, however commodious, far from suffices for the public needs. During the Exhibition of 1878 nearly two millions of passengers passed the turnstiles. I should like to learn the statistics of traffic on the occasion of the Russian-French fêtes of the present year.

NOTE 13, p. 289.—PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE

Some people are still of Louis Blanc's opinion that Protestantism no longer exists in France. The following figures will show that the Reformed religion has still root on French soil. I quote from the *Église Libre*, 31st March 1893.

At the present time 781 French towns possess Protestant churches, these figures being exclusive of English places of worship. The Reformed Church (Calvinistic) numbering 887 pastors, 35 colleges, 55 Lycées for boys, 7 for girls, 12 chapels attached to garrisons. The Augsburg Confession or Lutheran Church counts 90 ministers, the Free Church 47, the Methodist 31, the Baptist 33. In addition there are 6 independent churches and 16 Evangelical societies.

The Protestant community numbers many missionary and evangelical societies both at home and abroad, 44 orphanages, 60 hospitals, crèches, and homes for the aged, 20 reading-rooms for soldiers, 93 Christian associations, 118 newspapers.

Protestantism is still a force, therefore, spiritual, social, intellectual. And in spite of some narrowness, to be laid to these churches of reform, they illustrate, both in their

teaching and practice, one of the last and wisest sayings of the "wise-browed Goethe": "We scarcely know what we owe to Luther and the Reformation," he said to Eckermann shortly before his death. "We are freed from the fetters of spiritual narrow-mindedness; we have, in consequence of our increasing culture, become capable of turning back to the fountain-head and of comprehending Christianity in its purity."—*Conversations with Eckermann*, p. 568: Bohn.

I cite the following from the *Daily News* of September 1893:

An interesting account has just appeared of some of the Protestant organisations which exist in Paris, and indeed throughout France, for the benefit of young women and girls who have to live alone. The International Union of the Friends of Young Women has founded in various towns of France twenty-one homes where young women are fed and lodged very cheaply, and can enjoy many social pleasures. In Paris there is also the Christian Asylum for Female Domestics, where servants are lodged for one and a half francs, or fifteenpence a day, and at the Temporary Asylum for Protestant Women the fees amount to only half a crown a week. There is also a workshop for unemployed workwomen, where plain needlework is found and well paid for. Paris has a club for shop-girls, which is open every afternoon and evening, where lessons in English and music are given gratuitously. At this house the average daily attendance is between thirty and forty. There is also a Convalescent Home for Protestant young women near the Bois de Boulogne, where they are allowed to stay for three weeks at a time. With few exceptions, these charitable institutions, though primarily intended for Protestants, are not exclusively sectarian.

I add that, in my account of Dijon, Vol. I., to my regret, I omitted to mention the existence of 5000 Protestants in a population of 66,000.



# INDEX

- AGRICULTURE, *see* Animals,  
     Crops, Machinery, Manures,  
     Peasants, Land-tenure  
     progress of, App. I. 301-  
     304  
     (in England), App. I. 301  
 Aigoual, the, 222  
 Aigues-Mortes, 143, App. I. 301  
 Aix-les-Bains, 52-61  
 Alpes Hautes, department of,  
     77-98  
     Maritimes, department of,  
     225-71  
 Alsace-Lorraine, annexation of,  
     103  
 Amboise, 197-200  
 American vines, 69, 215, 256  
 Anglo-French sympathies, 126,  
     App. I. 326-28  
 Animals, care and treatment of,  
     10, 21, 43, 45, 46, 60, 61,  
     68, 71, 83, 111, 114, 115,  
     123, 126, 129, 146, 147,  
     169, 175, 248, 249, 251,  
     287, App. I. 325, App.  
     II. 336-38, 340, 341  
 Anne of Brittany, 204  
     of France, 196  
 Antibes, 251-57  
 Apiculture or Bee-keeping, 72,  
     137, App. II. 331, 332  
 Archæologists, French, in Eng-  
     land, App. I. 327  
 Army, the French, 16, 91, 208,  
     209, 259  
 Arras, 13-17  
 Artois, 1-47  
 Asparagus, 143-45  
 Auray, 182, 183, 187  
 Aurillac, 285  
 Auvergne, Haute, 272-89  
*Avens*, 279  
 Aveyron, department of, 275-  
     289.  
*Aveyron, Our Home in*, App. I.  
     319  
 Avignon, 217-24  
*Azarole crategus*, the, 242  
  
 BALZAC, 90, 129, 195  
 Baudrillart, M., 113, 135, 137,  
     139, App. I. 294  
 Beauce, the, 191-200  
 Beetroot, 18-20  
 Beggars, 44, 61, 120, 161, 169,  
     210  
 Bertillon, M., App. I. 312  
 Bimetallism, App. I. 303  
 Blanc, Mont, name of, 51, 52,  
     App. I. 312  
 Blois, 198, 200-203  
 Bonelli, M., App. I. 312  
 Bonnassieux, sculptor, 93  
 Bourgeois, M., App. I. 311  
 Bourges, 206, 207

- Brandon, St., 178-82  
 Bréguet, M., App. I. 312  
 Breton character, 168  
 Brevet, the scholastic, 167, App. I. 306-308  
 Briec, St. 171-76  
 Broglie, Duc de, App. I. 304  
 Buckwheat, 142, 174, 175, App. II. 340  
 Buddhists, French, App. I. 325  
 Bull-fighting in Paris, App. I. 324  
 CAEN, 117  
 Calvados, department of, 116-151  
 Canalisation, App. II. 343  
 Canche, the, 5  
 Candolle, De, M., App. I. 312  
 Cannebière, the, 227, 228  
 Cannes, 259  
 Cantal, department of, 275-89  
*Carcan*, the, 62  
 Carlò, Monte, 261-70  
 Carnac, 182-84  
 Carnot, M., 51, App. I. 323  
   Mme., App. I. 323  
 Carrette, Mayor, 38  
 Castilon, 235, 246  
 Catechisms, Electoral, 134, App. II. 337  
 Causses, the, 275-89  
 Caux, Pays de, 107-15  
 Cévennes, the, 275-89  
 Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, App. II. 338, 342  
 Chambéry, 62-76  
 Channel Tunnel, App. I. 328  
 Chanzy, General, 193  
 Charles the Bold, 196  
   VIII., 197, 204  
 Charmettes, Les, 64, 65  
 Chartres, 205-210  
 Chartreuse, 87  
 Chauvin, Mademoiselle, App. I. 321  
 Cheesemaking, 286-88  
 Chély, St., d'Apcher, 282, 283  
 Chenonceaux, 199, 200  
 Cheptel, 137  
 Chimney sweeps, 73, 74  
 Cholera, 64, 116, 157, 158, 187, App. II. 339  
 Churning, methods of, 62, 123, 181  
 Cider, 9, 10, 110, 111, App. II. 334, 335  
   brandy, 160  
 Citeaux, 175, 176  
 Clairmarais, 45, 46  
 Code Civil, the, App. I. 324  
 Coligny, Admiral, 201, 202  
 Collège de France, App. I. 310-312  
 Comédie Française, App. I. 327  
 Comines, Philippe de, 205  
 Commercial Travellers, 85  
 Comte, Auguste, App. I. 310, 311  
 Convention, the, 51, 79, 159, App. I. 304  
 Cook, Mr. T., 276  
 Corday, Charlotte, 117  
 Costume, 162, 166, 172, 187, 197  
 Cotentin, the, 120, 121  
 Crécý, forest of, 4, 12  
 Croix, 26-28, 34  
 Crops, 7, 18-20, 41, 47, 58, 59, 67, 81-83, 86, 111, 112, 124, 127, 142, 143, 145, 160, 169, 175, 179, 183, 282  
 DAILY NEWS, 115, App. I. 295, 315-317, 324, 327, App. II. 343  
 Darwin, 134

- Daubrée, M., 279  
 Dauphiné, province of, 50-98  
 Departmental professors, 131,  
   132, 172-74, 255, App.  
   I. 302  
 Descartes, 195  
 Desprez, M., App. I. 312  
 Dieulafoy, Mme., App. I. 312  
 Dinan, 161-70  
 Dinard, 151, 159  
 Distillery, gin, 40  
 Donzère, 217, 218  
 Douai, 4, 47  
 Drainage, 194  
 Dumont, engineer, 216  
 Dupanloup, Bishop, App. I.  
   310  
 ECKERMANN, App. II. 345  
 Eiffel Tower, the, 206, App.  
   297, 312  
 Eliot, George, 41  
*Englishwoman's Review*, App.  
   I. 321  
 Énimie, St., 277  
 Étapes, 5  
 Eure and Loir, department of,  
   191-210  
 Everett, R. L., Mr., M.P., App.  
   I. 303  
 Exhibitions, Industrial, 173,  
   174, App. I. 327; App.  
   II. 344  
 FABISCH, sculptor, 94  
 Falaise, 118, 119  
 Farming, *see* High  
 Ferry laws, 163, 166, App. I.  
   306  
 Feuillet, Octave, 134  
 Finance, French, App. I. 295-  
   297  
 Fishermen, Breton, 171, 172  
 Flanders, French, 1-47  
 Florac, 289  
 Forts, 77, 78, 91, 98  
 Foville, M. de, 105, 129, App.  
   I. 292, 295, 297, 298, 319,  
   App. II. 332  
 François I., 197, 198  
   II., 199  
 Freycinet, de, M., App. II. 343  
 GAMBETTE, 91  
 Gambling Tables, 261-66  
 Gap, 87-92  
 Gévaudan, the, 273-282  
 Gladstone, Mr., 33  
 Goethe, App. II. 345  
 Grammont, Loi, 169, 269, App.  
   I. 325  
 Gray, 79  
 Grenoble, 77-87  
 Grétry, 104  
*Grottologie*, 221, App. I. 312  
*Grundschrwellen*, 215  
 Guépin, Dr. and Madame, App.  
   I. 309  
 Guillotière, La, 98, 231  
 Guise, Cardinal, 199, 200  
   Duke of, 199, 201, 202  
 Guizot, M., App. I. 307, 310  
 HACKETTE's school appliances,  
   167  
   publications, App. I. 311  
 Hamerton, Mr., 138, App. I.  
   307, 325  
 Haras, 127-129  
 Hastings, vandalism at, 119  
   lodging-house keepers, 234  
 Hauteville-Caumont, 6  
 Hemp, 81, 244  
 Henri III., 200-202  
   IV., 208  
 Herbages, 124  
 High Farming, 18-22, 41-46  
   cost of, App. II. 330  
 "Hivernage," 21  
*Höhlenkunde*, 221  
 Horticulture, 47, 177, *see*  
   Antibes



- Hotels, 6, 13, 14, 53, 75, 76,  
140, 149, 150, 171, 182,  
183, 187, 281,
- ILAN, St., 174-77
- Île Barbe, 97
- Indre and Loire, department of,  
191-210
- Industry and industrial peoples,  
App. I. 314-20
- Instruction, public, budget of,  
108, App. I. 304-309
- International, the, 32
- Iron Mask, the, 259
- Isère, department of, 77, 88
- Isère river, the, 79
- Isigny, 127
- JOANNE, 276, 289, App. II.  
339, 339
- Journal des Débats*, App. I. 315
- KAÏNITE, 179
- LABOUR Exchange, the, App. I.  
315-18
- Movement, App. I. 314
- Laffitte, Pierre, M., App. I. 311
- Lamballe, 172, 173
- Langogne, 277
- Larzac, the, 284
- Laura, Petrarch's, 220
- Lavoisier, 131
- Law, French, App. I. 323,  
324
- Légué, port of the, 171
- Lenthérie, M., 213-16, 221
- "Liage," 8, 112
- Libraries, public, 16, 33, 40,  
78, 95, 120
- Lille, 25-29
- Lison, 116, 122
- Litré, M., 32, 194, 275, App.  
I. 310, 311
- Live stock, 46, 72, 81, 83, 112,  
114, 115, 286
- Liverpool, App. II. 342, 343
- Loches, 203-205
- Loir and Cher, department of,  
191-210
- Lô, St., 120-35
- Longchamps, palace of, 229
- Loti, P., 171, 172
- Loudon, 218
- Louis XI., 196, 198, App. I.  
305
- XIV., 259
- Philippe, App. I. 305
- Lozère, department of, 206,  
275-89
- Lyons, 93-98, 226, App. II.  
332, 333
- Lytton, the Earl of, 102
- MACHINERY, agricultural, 22,  
41, 42, 173, 174, App. I.  
301
- Madder, 219
- Maine, the, 191-210
- Maintenon, Mme. de, 200
- Manche, department of the, 116-  
51
- Mans, Le, 191-94
- Manufactures and industries, 40,  
74, 87, 96, 103, 124, 160,  
181, 238, 239, 244, 287
- Manures, artificial, 20, 146,  
173, 179
- Marceau, 209
- Marguërite, Île de St., 259
- "Marnage," 8, 20
- Marryatt, Captain, App. I.  
327
- Marseilles, 227-232, App. II.  
342, 343
- Martel, M., 275, 284, App. I.  
313
- Martin, St., du Var, 235-45
- Marvéjols, 283
- Marx, Karl, 32
- Mask, Iron, the, 259
- May Day, celebration of, 35-38

- Mende, 206, 275, 277, 280,  
     282, App. I. 292  
*Métayage*, 66, 162, 169, 247  
 Michelet, 93, 137  
 Michel, Mont St. (Manche),  
     140-51  
     Mont St. (Morbihan), 183  
 Mildew, 69  
 Millau, 283  
 Miller, a French, 23, 24  
 Mistletoe, 129-31  
 Mistral, the, 224  
 Moles, 21  
 Monaco, 268, 270  
 Montauban (Ille and Vilaine),  
     172  
 Monte Carlo, 261-70  
 Montpellier le Vieux, 276, 281,  
     283  
 Mosquitoes, 258  
 Müller, Max, Mr., App. I. 325  
 Murray's *Handbooks*, 87, 276,  
     App. I. 291  
 Musées, 5, 6, 16, 25, 26, 33,  
     40, 78, 87, 96, 98, 101,  
     120, 183, 197  
  
 NADAUD, GUSTAVE, 34  
 Nantes, 158, 226, 227, App. I.  
     309  
     Edict of, 96  
 Napoleon I., 159, 198, App. I.  
     304  
     III., 198, App. I. 292,  
     310  
 Nice, 232, 233, 235, 269-272  
 Nord, department of, 25-38  
  
 OISANS, L', 286  
 Olives and olive culture, 218,  
     238-240  
 Orange trees, culture of, 256  
 Orleans princes, App. I. 292  
 Orne, department of, 111  
 Orphange, English, 250, 251  
  
 PADIRAC, 280  
*Pall Mall Gazette*, the, App. I.  
     307  
 Paper, consumption of, App. I.  
     300  
 Pas-de-Calais, 1-24, 39-47  
 Pasteur, M., App. I. 295  
 Peasants, condition and habits  
     of, 10, 11, 21, 57-61, 70-  
     73, 80-85, 113, 114, 122-  
     126, 145, 172, 175, 185,  
     187, 235-245, 253, 277,  
     278, 281, 285, App. I.  
     299, 301  
 Peat, 168  
 Penthievre, Fort, 185, 186  
 Pessicarz, 246-251  
 Petrarch, 220  
 Phylloxera, 53, 69, 215  
 Picardy, 1-47  
 Pickpockets, 226  
 Picture galleries, 16, 25, 40, 78,  
     102  
 Plessis-lès-Tours, 196, 197  
 Poitiers, Diane de, 200, 201  
 Polders, 141-147, App. I. 301,  
     App. II. 337, 338  
 Pollock, Sir W., App. I. 316  
 Pontorson, 140-151  
 Pont St. Esprit, 218  
 Population, 139  
 Positivism and Positivists, App.  
     I. 326  
*Positive Review*, the, App. I.  
     326  
 Post-office statistics, App. I.  
     300  
 Prevention of Cruelty to Ani-  
     mals, Society for the, 270  
 Professors of Agriculture, 131,  
     132, 172, 173, 255, App.  
     I. 302  
 Protection, 23, 24, 125, 126  
 Protestants and Protestantism,  
     288, 289, App. II. 344,  
     345

- QUIBERON, 155, 182, 185, 186,  
     187  
 Quintin, 178  
  
 RABELAIS, 195  
 Railway companies, 232, 235,  
     236  
     engineering, 87, 88  
     travelling and extension, 90,  
     116, 156, 170, 171, App.  
     I. 292-294; App. II. 343  
 Railways, effects of, 156, 174,  
     182, 186, 277  
 Rambaud's, M., work, App. I.  
     313, 326; App. II. 338,  
     339  
 Rance, the, 160, 161  
 Réclus, M. E., 74, 98, 278,  
     App. I. 306, 309, 312, 320,  
     321, App. II. 329, 343  
 Reinach, M., App. I. 313  
 Renan, 130, App. I. 310  
*Répiquage*, 173, 180, 233  
 Revard, Mont, 55  
 Rhône, department of the, 213-  
     224  
     the river, 213, 224  
     Bouches du, department of,  
     225-232  
 Ribard, Mlle., App. I. 321  
 Robespierre, 12, 13  
 Rodez, 283, 284  
 Romain, St., de Colbosc, 106-  
     115  
*Roof of France*, the, 277  
 Roquette, la, 237  
 Roubaix, 30-38  
 Rouen, 102-105  
 Rouergue, 273-290  
 Rousseau, J. J., 64, 65  
 Rozière, le, 283  
 Ruskin, 101, 207  
  
*SABLE COQUILLER*, 173, 179  
 Saint Chély d'Apcher, 282,  
     283  
 Saint Énimie, 279  
     Esprit Pont, 218  
     Flour, 282  
     Marguerite, Île de, 259  
     Martin du Var, 235-245  
     Romain de Colbosc, 106-115  
 Sandford, Mrs., App. I. 304  
 Saône, the, 214  
 Sarthe, department of, 191-210  
 Sauveterre, Causse of, 276-280  
 Savings' Banks, App. I. 297-  
     299  
 Savoy, department of, 51-76  
 Scarpe, the, 23  
 Schaffle, Dr. A., App. I. 320  
 Schiller, 199  
 Scholarship, progress of, App.  
     I. 311, 312  
 Scholarships, 253  
 Schools, agricultural, *see* An-  
     tibes, App. I. 302  
     *see* under this head, App. I.  
     304-309  
     art, 17, 33, 79  
     communal, 21, 44, 162-168,  
     183, 243  
     Lycées or public day-, 15,  
     194, App. I. 308  
     infant, 11  
     municipal, 107  
     technical, 33, App. I. 309  
     training, or École Normale,  
     17, 194  
     voluntary, 162-164, 167  
 Scientific progress, App. I. 312,  
     313  
 Scoria, 8, 179  
 Scott, Sir W., App. I., 327  
 Sculpture, modern French, 63,  
     93-95, 120, 230  
 Seine Inférieure, department of,  
     102, 106  
 Sforza, Ludovic, 205  
 Silk, Lyons, 34, 96, 97, App.  
     II. 332, 333  
 Simon, Jules, 157, App. I. 305

Simples or field remedies, 86  
 Slave-trade, the, 159  
 Socialist Mayor and Socialism,  
   30-38, App. I. 319, 320  
 Société Nautique in England,  
   App. I. 327  
 Soleillet, M., App. I. 312  
 Sorel, Agnes, 203, 205  
 Sorgues, the, 220-222  
 Souvestre, E., 157, 159  
 Spencer, H., 134, App. I. 306  
 Station-mistresses, 89  
 Strikes, App. I. 319  
 Stuart, Mary, 199  
 Sugar, beetroot, 18-20, 179  
 Suicide at Monte Carlo, 263-  
   265  
 Sully, 131  
 Sundays in France, 10, 17, 35,  
   57, 97, 98, 141, 269  
 TARENTEISE, LA, 68  
 Teegan, Mr., App. I. 304  
 Tenant farming, *see* Tenure of  
   land  
 Tenure of land, 47, 59, 66, 67,  
   70, 82, 112, 114, 137, 162,  
   247, 280, 282, 286-288  
 Three Eights, the, 35-38, App.  
   I. 319  
 Times, the, App. II. 333  
 Tobacco, culture of, 71, App.  
   II. 330, 331  
 Toulon, 226, 229, 232  
 Touraine, 191-210  
 Tours, 192-195  
 Touzard, M., 141, 143, 145  
 Tresserve, 55-61  
 Tribunal of Commerce, App. I.  
   321  
 Triple Alliance, the, App. I.  
   328  
 Trocadéro, Musée of, 208  
 Truffles, 223  
 Turner, 77, 79  
 Turnips, 179, 180

VAAST, Abbey of, 16  
 Valence, 217  
 Valognes, 127  
 Vaucluse, department of, 213-  
   224  
   fountain of, 220, 221  
 Ventoux, Mont, 217, 222, 223,  
   288, 289  
 Verney, Lady, 56  
 Veynes, 88  
 Vic-sur-Cère, 287, 288  
 Villiers, Vaysse de, 278  
 Vinci, Leonarda da, 198  
 Vineyards, 53, 58, 68, 69, 86,  
   177, 215, 256  
 Vitry en Artois, 18, 24  
 Viviers, 217

WAGES, 112, 184, 239, App. I.  
   314, 318  
 Warens, Mme. de, 64, 65  
 Wolves, App. II. 339  
 Women, peasant and working,  
   10, 13, 20, 73, 107, 114,  
   144, 145, 162, 171, 175,  
   234, 239, 244, 247, App. I.  
   308  
   higher education of, App. I.  
   308  
   advancement of, App. I. 320-  
   323  
 Wordsworth, 111  
 Wreckers, 158

YOUNG, ARTHUR, I, 62, 64,  
   81, 103, 104, 117, 172,  
   178, 179, 218, 228, 229,  
   231, 260, App. I. 301, App.  
   II. 341

ZINCKE, Mr. Barham, 124, 257,  
   App. II. 329  
 Zola, M., 73, 105, 113, 248,  
   277, App. I. 313

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